



Miss Hepzibah's Charge.

A NEW YEAR'S STORY.

BY ELSIE SNOWE.



HEPZIBAH Tuttle was one of those women about whose good looks there could be no two opinions—she was undeniably handsome, and her present biographer does not know of anyone who even wishes to deny that agreeable circumstance.

There are pretty women, handsome women, even beautiful women about whose beauty there are conflicting opinions; some are too pale, some are too rosy, some are too thin, some are too stout—Hepzibah combined all these varying qualities in precisely the right proportion, and when Jake Mariner declared that she was the handsomest woman in Freeport, the point was conceded with the most cheerful unanimity without even a dissenting voice. Even Hepzibah herself only laughed, and tossed her head as she answered, "Now, Jake, really it isn't manners you know, to flatter folk so to their face!"

"But you know it, my beauty, now don't ye, an' ye can't deny it," said Jake triumphantly.

"And don't want to! said Hepzibah," and as to knowin' it, where do you think my eyes be when I look in the glass? Not glancing back over my shoulder Jake, even when you are behind me;" and as that just happened to be what Hepzibah was doing at that moment—for Jake had

been called in to help hang up a bit of a mirror in a little room known as Miss Hepzibah's parlor—her admirer made so bold as just to touch the glossy coil of her rippling ruddy brown hair, having done which he was almost paralyzed at his own audacity, and between them they nearly broke the mirror, which prevented her "boxing his ears for his impudence," as she declared herself disposed to do, and then they both looked very warm and uncomfortable for a few minutes, and gave their entire attention to the mirror which was, at last, happily adjusted without any serious mishap.

"And mighty lucky it wasn't broken," said Hepzibah, "for that would have been seven years bad luck to both of us, and a pretty morning's work that would have been, I must say!"

"But not having had bad luck, Hepzy, dear, let us make it good luck now, before we part. You know my ship sails to-morrow, and if you don't promise to marry me when I come back this time, blessed if I care a continental cent if I ever come back or not—the Rooshians or the Prooshians may have me if they please, for I don't care if I ever see Boston Harbor again."

"Oh, lordy, Jake! Don't talk so awful," exclaimed Hepzibah, rather taken aback, for though Jake had been courting her, off and on, with very little encouragement for about five years past, he had never been quite so desperate about it before; and for the first time Hepzibah felt a strange fluttering somewhere in the region of her heart, and really felt that she would rather the "Rooshians" nor the

"Prooshians" should have possession of her Jake. Jake was quick enough to see that his words had made an impression, and before they parted Hepzibah had promised—if nothing happened in the meantime to prevent—that she would marry Jake within the year if he came back to claim her, and he came back, promptly and in good time, but very many things had happened in the interval which Hepzibah made haste to tell him as soon as she recovered her breath after the surprise of his sudden appearance.

But she was glad to see him—of that he could have no doubt, and her welcome was of the most encouraging kind; and while she ar-

sewed a button on his jacket — sailor-fashion using his horny palm for a



"AND JAKE SEWED A BUTTON ON HIS JACKET."

anged a row of plants she had got the gardener to pot for her, and Jake

thimble—the lovers discussed their future plans and Hepzibah explained why she

could not give up her mind to the immediate thought of bridal preparations on her own account. "You know, Jake, dear," she said, "although I have only been housekeeper here all these years, I have been just like one of the family, in a way; the two young ladies have loved me next to their own mother, and now that the dreadful railway accident I wrote you about has taken away both of their parents, I feel myself bound, as I may say, to be father and mother to both of them,—and in fact I promised Squire and Mrs. Ellerton never to forsake those two children,—for they ain't any more—and that promise left a smile and a look of content on the two dead faces that was a comfort to me when I placed roses and violets about them, and that gave me courage to meet those orphan children when they came to their sad home."

"But, Hepzy!" cried Jake in dismay, and the needle he had been trying to thread, fell helplessly from his trembling fingers, "you've never been an' promised not to marry me? I had your promise first, my girl, an' first come, first served is fair as well as polite."

Hepzibah stooped leisurely and picked up the needle before Jake quite knew he had dropped it. She jerked the thread from his hand with good-natured violence and proceeded to sew on the button with her own deft and well-shaped fingers,—and as this brought her quite close to Jake he did not fail to make use of his opportunity, and Hepzibah only became handsomer by the deepening of the damask roses in her comely cheeks. "No, stupid," she answered, "I said nothing at all about you—at that moment I don't think I remembered your existence, Jake, but I just promised to be mother an' father both to those girls till some one arrived to take my place, and relieve me of all further responsibility, and I mean to keep my word you may bet all you're worth, Jake Mariner!"

"Does that mean you won't marry me, Hepzy, till you've married off them two young ladies first?"

"Just about that, Jake," answered Hepzibah, with an irrepressible laugh at the tone and look of despair that had accompanied his words. "But don't be cast down, Jake—we won't either of us

have to wait long I'm thinking, for if one of them children ain't already in love then I don't know the signs; and the other one will be, the very first good-looking fellow she sees, for they run in couples, Miss Lilian and Miss Bessie. Off and on I've known them ever since they were born, and Miss Bessie has followed Miss Lil in everything, from measles, whoopin'-cough, scarlatina, to French, music an' German, an' if she don't fall in love with some one just to keep it up, I'm no prophetess, you mark my words." Jake shrugged his shoulders incredulously, and it must be added discontentedly, too, as he answered, "But even if that's so, Hepzy, there's no one in Freeport for a pretty girl to fall in love with"—"Not much choice, I must own," rejoined Miss Hepzibah, demurely, "or I'd never ha' taken up with you, Jake—but Miss Bess will find some one, you may be sure. When a girl's bent on fallin' in love, most any one will do, an' Miss Bessie is very enterprisin'. And what interests me in it all, Jake—there's a mystery, an' I just love a mystery."

"I bet you do," interrupted Jake, "or you wouldn't be a woman—Now I just hate a mystery, but tell us all about this one—"

"I mean to, if you'll stop interrupting—at least all I know about it; but if I knew it all, in this short while, there wouldn't be much of a mystery. After they received the news of their father's death, my ladies came home on the first steamer that left France. You know they had been away at school for more than five years, and I used to fear they'd have most forgot how to speak English, and it stands to reason that children get weaned away from their parents when they're separated from them by time as well as distance. But for all that, these two poor things were just broken-hearted when they came home, and found everything so changed and sad. But that doesn't account for Miss Lil's looks, and the kind of awful depression that seems to be on her spirit. The grief for the loss of her father and mother has gradually lessened and worn away in the six months they have been here, as is natural and to be expected; and Miss Bessie is sometimes as gay as a lark, full of fun and bursting out into song and

laughter, but always checking herself at sight of her sister's sad face, to fling her arms about Miss Lil and beg of her to forgive her.

"Now, why should Miss Lil be so heart-broken and in such a different way from Miss Bessie? They were both children when they went away, and Miss Lilian is naturally as gay and light-hearted as her sister; and death—even when it is sudden and terrible—doesn't change young people like that; for to them life is all in the present and the future, unless——"

"Unless *what*?" asked Jake, when he had waited at least a minute for Hepzibah to go on, for she had come to a sudden and complete pause, which continued so long that he began to fear she was never going to speak again.

"Unless," said Hepzibah at last, with a long-drawn sigh, "unless there has been something in her own personal experience to cause the change."

"Land sake! Hepzy, dear, ain't you inventin' a romance!" exclaimed Jake. What can Miss Lilian ha' done? She ain't killed anybody?"

"No, stupid—there needn't be any killin' about it—leastways not by her; but someone else may have killed someone, or something else! Killin' folk is not the only sort o' tragedy in life, and whatever it is, she is affected by it just the same as if she had done it, or was responsible for it herself——"

"Then you mean she's in love with some young fellow, Hepzy, dear, an' he's in a fix about something, an' she's a breakin' her heart about his misfortune," exclaimed Jake, expressing his thought in sudden jerks, according as it looked itself, and from his own amatory frame of mind inclined to sympathize with all other lovers, happy or otherwise.

"Yes, Jake, that's just about what I mean."

"But I don't see how that's goin' to help us, Hepzy—if she has an unhappy love affair on her mind, she may *never* get married, and as you've always said Miss Bessie follows her sister in everything she'll be an old maid too, and you'll remain an old maid to take care of 'em."

Hepzibah laughed heartily, and she answered:

"And so we'll be a society of old maids, Jake—but no! That's not the way I'm going to fix it. I mean to find out all about this thing—to pluck out the heart of the mystery—I saw that in one o' them play-books Miss Lilian's always reading—and then when I do know all about it, I'm going to fix things so as their course of true love may run smooth. That's from another one o' them blessed books, all writ by a fellow named Shake—something, and Miss Lilian's fairly wrapt up in them. The only thing she takes any real interest in since she came home, is them play-books. But I'll change all that, and when I've found out who her sweetheart is, and brought them together, it will only be to wait a little till Miss Bessie follows her example, and when I've married them off, and fulfilled my promise to their mother and father, then Jake, dear—why then——" and Hepzy blushed beautifully, while Jake caught her in his arms, and with his native, good, common-sense, made her promise then and there, that *nothing*, absolutely *nothing* should any longer delay their wedding—that of her young ladies being successfully accomplished.

Hepzibah promised readily enough, and Jake, knowing that further argument on the subject would be useless, decided that since he could not change her plans, he would bend all his energies toward helping them on toward the desired end; and Hepzibah's gratitude was of a kind to give additional ardor to Jake's good intentions. While this exchange of sentiments was taking place the front door bell rang loudly, and Hepzibah exclaimed:

"Now, Jake, you must leave me for to-day. Come to-morrow evening early. That ring at the bell is to announce Mr. Fitzherbert, the legal guardian of my young ladies. He's half an Englishman, but his mother was an American, and a cousin of my late master. He was traveling in foreign countries when Mr. Ellerton died, and the news was a long time reaching him, for no one knew his address, because he was going about from place to place, and that accounts for his delay in getting here. Miss Lilian had a telegram yesterday, announcing his arrival in New York, and adding that he would be here to-day. I must go and prepare my ladies."

Hepzibah soon knew that her surmise was correct, for as she passed the drawing-room, a glance into it showed her a tall, distinguished looking man at the farther end of it. He was standing before the picture of a beautiful girl, which formed the sole adornment of the wall at that side of the room; and he was still regarding this work of art when he was suddenly conscious of a presence, and a very low, sweet voice expressing its owner's pleasure in welcoming him.

Fitzherbert turned, with an almost imperceptible start, expecting to see the original of the picture before him; but even his well-trained nerves, and perfect self possession, were not proof against the surprise of this meeting, and he could not quite suppress the cry of astonishment, mingled with pain that broke from his lips.

Lilian Ellerton uttered not a sound; her heart seemed frozen; her pulses stopped, and not even a sigh escaped her pallid lips, as she fell forward so suddenly that Fitzherbert had but time to catch her in his outstretched, pitying arms.

His first act was to carry her to a lounge, on which he laid her with the tenderest care, and then to place beneath her head, two or three of the dainty silken pillows, that were strewn about with the profusion characteristic of modern drawing-rooms. He then gently clasped her hands, apparently unwilling to call for help, in the hope that she might regain consciousness without assistance. But having waited some minutes in anxious expectation, while Lilian only seemed to grow paler and colder, he turned away and had just put out his hand toward the bell, when a young girl—the very counterpart of the charming picture he had been admiring—came bounding into the room, and rushing toward him, seized his hands and held them fast within her own.

"Oh, Cousin Herbert!" she cried joyously, "I am so glad to see you! Of course you don't know me, but you might guess, since Lilian is here already. I am Bessie—and you are very, very welcome. We are glad to see *anybody* here, for of all the dead-and-alive places on the face of the globe, I do think that Freeport must be the dearest."

"Mr. Fitzherbert laughed pleasantly,

and declared he was glad to be welcomed even on such questionable grounds; then raising the two little hands so frankly placed in his he kissed them, and hoped he might be able to impart a touch of vivacity to the dull life of Freeport."

"But where is Lilian?" Miss Bessie continued. "She left me to come to meet you. I thought she was here."

"She is," said her companion gently, as he moved so that Bessie could see the lounge before which he had been standing. "Pray don't let me alarm you—I'm sure it is nothing serious—but your sister has fainted!"

Notwithstanding his caution, however, Bessie had uttered a loud exclamation of alarm; and the next moment she was kneeling by the lounge, holding her sister's hand, and imploring her to speak.

"Pray—pray, dear Miss Bessie, be calm—be quiet! I am quite sure your sister would not wish anyone to know—"

"To know what? That she has fainted?—is there anything wrong in that? Really, Mr. Fitzherbert, you are too mysterious—and for a stranger!—but—and she suddenly started to her feet, and confronted him with the expression of an avenging fury, "perhaps you are *not* a stranger. Have you ever met my sister before?"

"Only once—and believe me if I have caused her to faint I am quite innocent of any intention to give her even a moment's alarm."

"Of course!" exclaimed Bessie, "I beg your pardon—you must think me very silly, but I am so frightened."

"I think there is no need—if you will only bring some strong-smelling salts, or something of that sort—"

Bessie instantly caught at the suggestion, and was back again with restoratives so quickly she hardly seemed to have left the room; and under the influence of some powerful lavender salts Lilian speedily revived. But to Bessie's intense disappointment her first words were a request to Mr. Fitzherbert to leave them for the present—

"Come again to-morrow if you will—pray don't think me rude or ungrateful. I owe you a debt of gratitude already—but you will understand that I must have a little time to accustom myself to this—"

this surprise—to find that of all men on earth *you* should be my guardian—oh!”

She became so pale that Bessie hastened to put her arm about her; fearful that she was about to faint again.

“Of course I understand—pray don't distress yourself. I will come again to-morrow—*au revoir*.”

He was gone, and Bessie assisted her sister from the room, and though on fire with curiosity she never opened her lips to ask a question, waiting with exemplary patience till Lilian chose to speak and explain. But hours passed, and Lilian either paced her room to and fro, or sat by the window looking vacantly out upon the chill December landscape over which the first snow of the season was slowly falling, till everything she gazed on was a blurred and shapeless mass of confusion, and then with a shiver she turned away and drew the curtains. Bessie rang for lights, and bade the servant pile on fresh logs



"I SUPPOSE YOU GUESS WHO THAT MAN IS?"

till a cheerful blaze illumined the room; and when Hepzibah came up with a dainty little supper—for neither of the sisters had tasted dinner—she thanked her sweetly, promised that Lilian should eat, and then with a fervent embrace bestowed on the handsome housekeeper, led her out in the hall, and the door between them locked as cleverly as the most mature woman of the world could have done it.

"That child that I have rocked in my arms," said Hepzibah indignantly, as she told it to Jake next day, "and we are dying to know what has happened, for, say what you like, Jake, there *is* a mystery, and it deepens!"

Bessie hastily changed her afternoon dress for a wrapper; unbound her glittering golden hair, and seated herself on a low stool before the fire. Lilian had already changed her costume for a dressing gown, and as she now leaned against the mantlepiece, her long dark hair falling like a cloud over her white dress the sisters were a striking contrast—Lilian dark and bright and beautiful, Bessie, fair and sweet and reliant.

"I suppose you guess who that man is?" said Lilian at last.

"What man? oh, Mr. Fitzherbert? yes, he's our guardian," Bessie returned nonchalantly, for she was somewhat provoked at being kept waiting so long.

"Our guardian—yes—and the man who saved me and brought me back to Paris when I had run away with a strolling player believing myself to be his wife, only to learn, as we landed at Dover, that he was already a married man, and claimed there by his lawful wife, while I still clung to his arm believing him to be my husband—can I ever forget it? what an escape!—I ought to be grateful to that woman for claiming him then and there, and yet I'm not—I wish I had never seen her—I wish I had never known—I wish I had gone with him to the end of the world, for, oh, Bessie, I love him! I love him now! and I must love him forever."

This part of the story Bessie had heard already, on that dreadful day, more than a year ago, when Lilian had disappeared, to return the same night, a grief-stricken creature looking years older than the bright girl of only the day before. No

one but Bessie and the Superior of the Convent had ever been told the story of that day, and Bessie even discouraged all reference to the subject because it had such a painful effect on her unhappy sister. But the appearance of Mr. Fitzherbert as a part of the drama brought a new element of interest into it, and the young girl could not but wish that her sister might enter into a fuller explanation than she had ever done before. "And was Cousin Fitz," he was hardly cousin by courtesy, so distant was the relationship, but from the first Bessie chose to call her guardian cousin, "was he *very* nice to you, Lil, dear?"

"O, Mr. Fitzherbert's behavior was quite perfect," Lilian answered carelessly. "From the first moment I saw him I turned to him for help as naturally as if he had been my brother. When that dreadful woman came forward and claimed my Jack for her husband I felt only surprised at first, and but for Jack's white face, convulsed with agony, I would have laughed at her. I asked only one question—

"Is that woman your wife?"

"I did not know—Lil, listen to me, I can explain!" stammered Jack; I merely repeated my words,

"Is that woman your wife?"

"Yes, God help me, she is!" he answered.

I don't know how I got away from him, but the next moment I was speaking to the gentleman who turns out to be our guardian. I don't know what I said—something about returning to Paris, and the convent where I had been at school. Then Jack was again beside me—he called me 'Lilian, his love, his wife,' and caught me in his arms. But Mr. Fitzherbert drew me from his grasp, and placed himself between us.

"This lady is in my care, Sir, and you will do well to remember that the laws of this country permit a man to have only one wife at a time—Retire, or you will force me to call for the assistance of the police." At the same moment that wretched woman seized Jack again, and for my sake he allowed himself to be dragged away. The boat which had brought us to Dover returned again in an hour, and it was already dark when we

landed in Calais. I was aware, as we are in dreams, that my unknown friend still took charge of me, and never left me till he had placed me in the hands of the Mother Superior late that night; but as you know, dear, it was days and even weeks before I recovered sufficiently to wonder at, and feel grateful for that stranger's kindness. But I know now—I am sure of it—that Jack was not to blame. If I would have listened he would have explained everything; but of course I doubted him at first—the shock was too great. Of course he tried to see me—of course he wrote to me—poor fellow! a hundred times, but the Mother Superior was not to be deceived a second time, and my poor Jack! He was forced to give me up at last. I shall never hear of him again—no doubt he has forgotten me.”

“No, no, Lil, dear, no one could forget you,” Bessie said in her most soothing tones, for she saw that Lilian was much agitated under a forced composure. “Talk no more of it to-night, but come to bed and dream of him.” When their guardian came on the following day he was cordially received by his two wards, and was very soon a constant visitor.

“He stays at the hotel,” said Hepzibah “but he lives here, Jake; and Miss Bessie counts the hours between his calls. Well, it will be a good match, tho’ he’s ten years older than the child, but he’s just the husband she needs.”

“Exactly—if he thinks so; but *does* he, Hepzy? Miss Bessie has her doubts or why *does* she watch him like a cat watching a mouse when he’s with her sister?”

“That’s so, Jake, and I’m a bit puzzled myself about Mr. Fitzherbert, but if he’s in love with Miss Lilian he’s nursing a heart-ache for himself, for he’s not the one.”

“But who *is* the one, Hepzy?”

“Ah—that’s the mystery, but I’ve a clue to it, Jake, and I want you to help me follow it up. I’ve told you of Miss Lil’s craze for play-books?—well, I happen to know that she’s going to a play New Year’s Eve, and she not out of her first year’s mourning—and she’s going disguised, and with her guardian. Now, Jake, you can take me to the play that night, but I shan’t look at the actors—what I

want to see is Miss Lilian while she watches Mr. Jack Marlowe playing Hamlet.”

Mr. Mariner gave an admiring glance at his sweetheart.

“By thunder! Hepzy, you should ha’ been on the detective service.”

At that very moment Fitzherbert closed a volume in which he and Lilian had been looking for a quotation. They were in the conservatory, and as she sat close beside him, her hand clasped on the arm of his chair, any one looking on might easily have thought them lovers. Some one who was looking on, concealed by a huge palm at the back of the conservatory, certainly thought so; and it would have been difficult to recognize in that death-like, drawn and haggard face, the lovely, blooming countenance of Bessie. How she hated herself for being there—how she longed to get away—but there was only one exit, and she had taken such pains to conceal herself that she might listen to words it almost killed her to hear! Would they never go? Perhaps they would stay there all afternoon and read and make love! And this was Lilian whom she had sorrowed over! Lilian, who had pretended to love another man—oh! oh! she feared now she would hate them more than she had ever loved them!

Fitzherbert rose, and Lilian also stood up beside him—“I must leave you now,” he said, “but you have my promise, Lilian, and you know I will keep it. The desire to insure your happiness is very near my heart, and there is nothing I would not attempt in the hope of helping you, because—”

“Because you are in love with my sister,” said Lilian, filling up the pause, and half-laughing.

“Why should I not admit it, Lil? Because I love Bessie,—Yes, but I will never tell her so while you remain unhappy.”

They passed from the room and Bessie glided out from her hiding place, and what a radiant Bessie she looked now!

“He loves me!” she murmured, “*me*! O, what a wretch I am—I can never dare look either of them in the face again.”

* * * * *

The curtain had fallen on the play, and half the women in the house declared

themselves in love with the Prince of Denmark. But Hepzibah had not seen Hamlet—her gaze had been fixed on Lilian.

"Yes, Jake," she whispered, "He's

He's just buried his wife—its a romantic story—She was a beauty once, but she took to rum, and went mad. Her friends pretended she was dead, and put her in a



"ANY ONE LOOKING ON MIGHT EASILY HAVE THOUGHT THEM LOVERS."

the one—Miss Lilian loves that actor-man, and I have unravelled the mystery. I've been inquiring into his affairs.

madhouse, but she escaped and followed him about—he fell in love with a girl in a convent school and ran away with her

—then the dead woman came to life. It's all as clear as the stars on a frosty night—Jake, don't you smell fire? Where's that smoke coming from? Oh!—Miss Lilian!"

At that moment Lilian, who was the first to see the flames, uttered a sharp cry and darted through the crowd; in an instant she had leaped on a chair, from that to the stage; and Fitzherbert saw her disappear behind the curtain before he realized that she had left him. For some moments there was a panic, accompanied by the usual shrieking and pushing; but calm was speedily restored, as the curtain rolled up again, and showed the charred remains of a bit of scenery which had ignited by the side-lights, and was already safely quenched.

Fitzherbert had followed Lilian as soon as he comprehended her flight, and when he found her she was already in Jack Marlowe's arms; and even that brief time had sufficed for satisfactory explanations.

Jake and Hepzibah were the first to arrive at home, but Fitzherbert was close after them. Bessie did not start upon the order of her wooing, but said "Yes" at once, while she laughingly ordered her slave to help her prepare a New Year's welcome for Lilian and her lover; and when they all pledged each other, Jake and his sweetheart were not forgotten, and in all Freeport or anywhere else, there were no more sincere or hearty wishes all round for a "Happy New Year."





\$5,000 FOR A WIFE.

By the Author of "Wedded to Misery."

IV.

LLEWELLYN left Mr. Eyre very much excited. He loved Antoinette and she was in all probability going to marry Taunton.

"She shall not do it!" he said fiercely; "I will expose him to her at any cost. Whether she cares for me or not, I will not suffer her to marry that rascal!"

The idea enraged him.

"Why is it that Mr. Eyre fears Taunton so?" he asked himself over and over again. "There is something back of it, I know. It is not his nature to play the sycophant, and he must know what kind of a man Taunton is! Yet he is willing to stand by and see his daughter marry a man who is utterly devoid of principle. I confess I can't understand it."

He walked on turning the problem over and over in his mind.

"I went to Taunton and bought through him because I thought that if I were brought more closely in contact with him, I might find out something I wanted to know, but——"

"Evening Telegram, sir!" shouted a small boy at his heels, and then Llewellyn remembered that he had something else to worry about beside his love affairs. He bought a paper, on the first page of which he caught sight of the head-lines: "WALL STREET WILD — A FLURRY IN STOCKS. Y. & C. DROPS TO 22."

"Hum!" he said, grimly. "I shall hear from Taunton to-night. If this insatiable demand for margin keeps up much longer, it will eat me out of house and home."

He crushed the paper into his pocket and started on, but directly in his path stood the newsboy and an elderly gentleman who had been buying a paper and was raging against the newsboy because it wasn't the last edition.

"Tain't out yit, boss, I tell you!" said the little fellow, stoutly.

"Don't lie to me!" retorted the irate party bringing down his cane on the pave-

ment with fierce emphasis. "I know—I—"

He stopped suddenly, and over his face swept that wave of blue and red, while from his lips came the strange cry which presages an epileptiform seizure.

Llewellyn started forward just in time to catch him. A crowd gathered in a moment, but Llewellyn bade them lift the old man and carry him up to his rooms which were just around the corner. In half an hour the epileptic was lying on a couch talking volubly of his mishap.

"You caught me, didn't you?" he said to Llewellyn. "Well, if it hadn't been for that brat of a boy, it wouldn't have happened. But I suppose I'll die in one of these fits some day."

"I think you ought to be very careful," said Llewellyn who was at loss for a reply.

"Careful!" echoed the old gentleman, savagely. "Lord! Haven't I? These confounded doctors have been tinkering at me ever since I fell on the ice and cracked my head open. I can't do this, and I can't do that, and the result is I don't do anything. I can't even go on 'Change any more. It's as much as they'll let me do to read the papers."

"Well, I shouldn't think that going on 'Change was the best thing for you," said Llewellyn, smiling.

"Ever been there?"

"Oh, yes! I dropped in this morning."

"Take a flyer?" asked the old gentleman with interest.

"I have ten thousand shares of Y. & C.'"

"Long or short?"

"Long."

"*The Devil!*" the old man sat upright and stared at him. "You are crazy."

"No, I am not. If I had more margin, I'd make it twenty thousand."

"Then you must have more points than are on the market," he said, lying down again.

Llewellyn smiled grimly. His guest lay quiet for sometime.

"Do you think you feel able to be moved now?" Llewellyn asked. "If you like, I'll ring for a coupé, and take you around to the Hoffman."

"I don't want to go just yet," said the old man shortly. "I'm very comfortable. Why can't I lie here for awhile?"

"You can, if you like."

There was another silence, and then the old fellow said suddenly:

"Young man! You ought not to speculate. It will be your ruin."

"So I have heard," Llewellyn answered coolly; "but the difference between having one dollar and having none, is so trifling that I can't see that it matters much. Besides, I think I heard you fretting a moment ago because you were debarred from the excitement of going on 'Change.'"

The old man was drawing patterns on the carpet with his cane.

"My name is Blount," he said, fumbling after his card. "Perhaps you've heard of me."

"Oh, yes!" cried Llewellyn looking up in surprise. "Often."

"Well!" said Mr. Blount, taking out his handkerchief to polish his glasses. "Suppose you give me your points on Y. & C., and—if they're good for anything, I'll put up some margin and go halves with you."

"Good!" said Llewellyn. "It is a bargain. There is not much to tell only—the Transatlantic has bought the Y. & C. outright. The sale was consummated on the 19th—a *bona fide* sale."

"How do you know?" cried the old man in amazement. "Good gracious! If that is true——"

"I saw the agreement by the merest accident, when I was riding in a Pullman a couple of weeks ago. The whole thing will come out in a few days."

"The stock will go up like a rocket!" cried Mr. Blount enthusiastically. "It is as good as striking a gold mine. The very bottom is falling out of the old thing now; it has gone into the hands of a receiver, you know."

"Yes; but a fortnight hence there won't be a better selling stock on the market."

"Draw up an agreement!" said Mr. Blount with growing interest. "I'll back you for twenty thousand shares."

Llewellyn was not slow to avail himself of this offer. That afternoon he telegraphed Taunton to buy twenty thousand more shares of Y. & C.

"Where in the deuce is he getting this money?" Taunton queried. "It is begged, borrowed or stolen somehow. I'd wager my head Llewellyn hasn't five thousand dollars to his name."

Y. & C. was still feverish. It dropped a quarter, then a half, rose one and fell two, closing at 20. Taunton was jubilant.

V.

The residence of Mr. Israel Blount was in the suburbs of the city—a splendid estate just this side of Bonnybrae, Mr. Eyre's old property and at present owned by Geoffrey Taunton, Esq.

Mr. Blount had recovered promptly from the attack which had led to his acquaintance with Llewellyn, and was now at home, as well as he ever had been since the beginning of his epileptic seizures.

Mr. Blount was a bachelor, but enthusiastic advocates of the conjugal state would have been chagrined if they had sought to find in him an example of solitary misery.

To have seen Mr. Blount at dinner on a certain evening, when his charming housekeeper was doing the honors over a brass coffee-beggin and the daintiest of after-dinner cups, one would hardly have considered him an object of pity.

Mrs. Tremaine had been at Tally-ho only a short time, but she was already quite at home in Mr. Blount's house and on excellent terms with the master. She was there through the influence of Mr. Geoffrey Taunton, Mr. Blount's neighbor.

"Not that I would trust Taunton in most things," the old gentleman said to himself more than once, "but I certainly owe him a debt of gratitude in this matter."

But on the occasion in question, Mr. Blount's satisfaction and serenity were clouded by the influence of an unusual circumstance. In a weak moment he had given his consent to have an ice carnival on the grounds at Tally-ho, and he had long since repented his indulgence.

"When do you expect those people?" he said discontentedly.

"From eight to nine," Mrs. Tremaine

replied, pushing her cup aside with a glance at the clock. "Won't you want to dress?"

"Dress—thunder!" said the old gentleman forcibly. "Not much! I shall put on my top-coat and cap, and there's an end of it. You don't suppose for one minute that I am going to stand out there on the ice and get my death a-cold? No, madame! I'm going to bed early and get some sleep, if this confounded music don't hinder me."

Mrs. Tremaine smiled and rose from the table.

"You need not bother, at all events," she said sweetly. "I will look after everything."

Mr. Blount had no idea of bothering. He smoked his cigars and read his papers till the crunching of carriage-wheels on the snow-packed drive routed him out of his half-dozing reveries.

"Well!" he said resignedly. "I suppose I must make my appearance anyhow!"

In this dubious state of mind, he emerged from his den, and, after carefully protecting himself from the cold, he stepped out on the piazza.

Mrs. Tremaine was just escorting some newly-arrived guests to the scene of the Carnival, and Mr. Blount was promptly presented to a young girl whose bright and beautiful face struck his fancy from the first.

"Well!" he said sharply in his brusque way. "This is Miss Eyre, is it? My old neighbor! I suppose people would say I had poor taste not to know you before—eh?"

"I am very sorry you never came to Bonnybrae, while we were there," said Antoinette with a conscious flush which made her look still prettier in her jaunty suit of white corduroy with its soft down trimmings.

"Well, I don't know how it was," said Mr. Blount, looking at her over his gold-rimmed glasses. "Never was inside of the house then—was I? But since Taunton had it—I swear Taunton beats anything I ever saw. He's had me there twice to dine, and he has taken me by the horns, so to speak, and pulled me out of my stable."

"That is taking the bull by the horns,

I suppose," said Antoinette, who knew of Mr. Blount as a great speculator.

"Bless me!" he said laughing. "What do you know about bulls and bears, child? You look like a little bit of a—"

"Snow-bird!" said Antoinette, nodding her head. "That is my character for the evening. Now, don't tell me you wouldn't have known it. That is what Papa said."

"Well!" said Mr. Blount, looking first under and then over his glasses again, "I'm not much for fallals and fixings, but—" he eyed her again—I guess you'll do."

Do! What did the old man want? Antoinette looked lovely in her white feather cap and the soft down trimmings that drifted about her like snow. White wings ornamented her short skirt and the full sleeves that were so becoming. She wore a bunch of white chrysanthemums in her corsage, and over her dress was spread a film of fine silver tracery that might have passed for Jack Frost's etching or bits of frozen cobweb.

"Everybody looks nice to-night," said Antoinette, glancing across the scene of the prevailing festivities.

"Well!" Mr. Blount replied with his usual frankness. "I think most of them look like a parcel of idiots—if you want to know my candid opinion. You know this is Taunton's doing—Taunton and Mrs. Tremaine. Between them—bless me! I'll make a fool of myself yet."

"Why, everybody says it is so nice of you to give this ice-party. The costumes are so pretty, and your grounds are magnificent. Just look at the Lake! Isn't it like a scene from a fairy tale!"

"Oh!" responded the bluff old gentleman. "The lake is well enough, though I expect those Chinese lanterns will all catch fire before the evening's over, and half of you will be down with influenza to-morrow."

Antoinette laughed. Taunton was just coming up, and his eyes rested admiringly on her *riante* face.

"Won't you persuade Mr. Blount to come and join us?" she cried as she held out her hand to Taunton.

"My dear Miss Eyre!" Mr. Blount interposed. "Taunton is irresistible, I

admit, but—I haven't had influenza for nothing. No, indeed! Enjoy yourself, if you like. I shall be in the library till ten, and then I am going to bed."

"Mr. Blount does not skate, you know," said Taunton, smiling.

"So far as I can see, there are not very many skaters!" said Mr. Blount as he moved away. "Most of the girls skate like the—ahem! I beg pardon, Miss Eyre! I hope you have a pleasant evening!"

Taunton shrugged his shoulders as the old man went away.

"You mustn't mind him," he said, apologetically.

"Oh, I don't in the least!" was Antoinette's cheerful response.

"He is so eccentric! and as rich as he is queer," he added.

"What a pity there is no one to get all his money," said Antoinette, idly. "He seems so utterly alone."

"If I am not mistaken, Mrs. Tremaine will have a slice of it," said Taunton, glancing towards the house where a lady wrapped in furs had stopped on the steps to talk to Mr. Blount.

"The housekeeper!" Antoinette exclaimed in surprise.

"She is barely thirty," Taunton replied. "Stranger things have happened."

"Well," said Antoinette, "after all, I do not see why—"

"Daughter!" Mrs. Eyre was calling. "I have been hunting you everywhere. I was afraid you were sitting down somewhere and would catch your death. Have you had coffee? They are serving the most delicious coffee and genuine Russian tea in the booth."

"I was just going to ask Miss Eyre," Taunton interposed.

"Let us go," Antoinette suggested. "Mamma, have you seen Mr. Llewellyn skate? There he is—see! He is doing the Russian pirouette."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Eyre, slightly. "That is not so difficult. They tell me any lady can do that. Count Tolstoy taught the Boyntons last winter, you know."

"Shall I bring your coffee here?" Taunton asked, "or will you go all the way down to the Pavilion?"

"Oh, let us have it here!" Mrs. Eyre

suggested, "one has such a charming view of the lake. The bonfires show so finely—it is quite like a spectacle."

Antoinette looked annoyed, but Taunton was gone in a moment. Her mother turned to her rather hastily.

CHAPTER VI.

"Toinette," Mrs. Eyre said decidedly, "I do not want you to have anything to do with that Mr. Llewellyn. He—he has been out with the Ice Boat Club, and Mrs. Stewart says they have all had too much champagne."

"Oh, mamma! Mr. Llewellyn never does anything like that."

"Nonsense! you don't know anything about him. Look at him, now! He is skating with that Crawford girl. You know what a fast piece she is. Upon my soul, he almost has his arm around her waist."

Antoinette looked the other way. It was not like Llewellyn to make such a show of himself. Could it be possible he had been drinking too much?

Taunton brought the coffee in a moment—delicious Mocha cooled with frozen cream.

"You will take a turn with me, now—won't you?" he asked when the little Sèvres cups were emptied. "Hark! The musicians are playing that divine waltz of Chopin's. Allow me!"

Mrs. Eyre smiled approvingly as Taunton knelt down and put on Antoinette's skates. In a moment more, they were skimming over the ice together, for neither of them merited Mr. Blount's aspersions. They were both good skaters.

"How delightful this is!" Antoinette cried, breathlessly, as they circled over the ice to the strains of entrancing music.

Taunton pressed the little hand which he held, and smiled down into her lovely, flushed face.

"By Jove!" he thought. "She is a pretty girl—if she only had a little *diable*—ie. Now, at her age, Nana—"

Antoinette gave a sudden cry.

"Take care," she exclaimed, but it was too late. A gentleman who was skating rapidly backward came in direct collision with Taunton, who was knocked down and whirled some distance over the ice.

"I beg your pardon," cried the skater, who had somehow managed to keep his balance through it all.

"Confound you, Llewellyn," grumbled Taunton as he scrambled up, feeling mad and sore. "If you wouldn't try so much fancy business on the ice, it would be more sensible."

"I'm very sorry," Llewellyn said, honestly.

"Well, you've managed to break my skate for me," said Taunton, crossly.

"Let me fix it for you," Llewellyn offered.

"Let it alone, please; I'll fix it myself, Miss Eyre, if you will excuse me."

He scrambled ashore as best he could, refusing all assistance, while Llewellyn stood there in great discomfiture.

"It is too bad," he said; "I am really very sorry, but I didn't see you at all."

"I don't think it is wise to attempt skating backward on such a crowded pond," Antoinette replied, coldly.

"Perhaps not," said Llewellyn, with a flush. "But I am so fond of the ice. The music carried me away. I feel like cutting up all kinds of pranks. Where have you been? I have been looking for you all evening."

"I came late."

"Will you not take a turn with me on the ice?"

"I am with Mr. Taunton."

"But Taunton will be some time in fixing his skate."

"I could not be so rude as not to wait for him."

"Ah, I see!" said Llewellyn bitterly. "It is a fine thing to be a favorite. But," he added with rising anger, "we used to be good friends, Antoinette. Because you prefer Mr. Taunton, is no reason why you should treat me as you do. It is unkind and ill-bred. I expected something else from you."

"I am not accustomed to lectures on etiquette from gentlemen," she said with pique; "and I am afraid I do not appreciate them—quite."

"Antoinette!" he cried hotly, "something has changed you. You are not like you used to be. Tell me, are you engaged to Geoffrey Taunton?"

"I will not answer such a question,"

she replied. "You have no right to ask it. When I am ready to announce my engagement, I will do so publicly."

"You seem to forget some things," said Llewellyn bitterly. "You know how much I care for you. You are cruel to me, Antoinette!"

"For pity's sake," she said pettishly, "do not make a scene out here; you forget yourself."

"I forget nothing! It is you who forget. What is this man Taunton, that he seems to have such a power over you all? Your father is his abject slave, and you—"

"I decline to discuss our family affairs with you," she said, haughtily.

Llewellyn whirled himself around.

"I shall leave you to yourself," he said, gliding away. "Your model cavalier is coming."

Taunton joined her in a minute. She was flushed and angry, and yet, woman-like, it made her furious when Llewellyn flitted by her with the ultra Miss Crawford.

"He is certainly intoxicated," she said to herself. "He would not have acted so if he were not. 'Mr. Taunton,' she said aloud, turning to her escort with an over-sweet smile. "You said you would teach me to cut a star."

"But you have to fall down to see it," said Taunton, flippantly.

"I think you can show me how to do that, too," said Antoinette, laughing.

Taunton struck out with a flourish, and Antoinette followed his movements as nearly as she could.

"Why, that doesn't look anything like a star!" she said, as she glided off to imitate him.

"Well, you see," he said, "you have to hit your head on the ice as a finishing touch—put a period to it, as it were."

Antoinette laughed, but the sound had hardly died from her lips ere it was followed by a scream. There was a crackling, ominous sound over the ice, and then Antoinette disappeared in the ugly chasm that opened under her feet.

The terror of that moment is better fancied than described. Antoinette felt the icy waters gurgling around her. She gasped and tried to scream, but the chilly element bereft her of every sense, save that of feeling. Taunton shouted. There

was a rush and suddenly the orchestra stopped with a crash. In Antoinette's fingers the bits of ice for which she clutched broke away like spun glass. The festive scene assumed the aspect of a hideous nightmare. Death seemed to reach up his bony hand from beneath those cold waters and drag her down.

Happily for Antoinette, her own abject terror brought with it unconsciousness. As she sank through the ice she fainted. She heard and saw nothing till she felt a pair of strong arms about her, and she heard someone say:

"Give her to me, Llewellyn. You must be exhausted."

"Thank you, no!" said Llewellyn, tightening his arms about his burden. "I can carry her up to the house. The exercise will keep me warm."

Antoinette opened her eyes. Her head was resting on Leigh Llewellyn's shoulder. His face was bent over her anxiously.

"Thank God, I was there in time!" he murmured. "Don't be frightened. You are safe with me."

Antoinette closed her eyes again. She was wet and dripping, but they had wrapped her in a fur cloak and she was not uncomfortable. A sense of safety and content came over her. Surely Leigh Llewellyn could not admire a girl like Belle Crawford, she thought, and she felt Leigh's arms quite tightly folded about her.

Mr. Blount had gone to bed, but Mrs. Tremaine had a room ready to receive Antoinette, and as Mrs. Eyre was quite overcome by the accident, the two ladies were accommodated for the night. Llewellyn got on some dry clothing and went home.

This accident rather broke up the ice party. There was a feeble attempt to renew the festivities, but one by one the skaters withdrew till Mrs. Tremaine was left alone in the library, *tête-à-tête*, as chance would have it, with Geoffrey Taunton.

"Why on earth didn't you fish your Dulcinea out of the water?" she said with a slight curl of her thin red lips. "That was an awful blunder."

Taunton shrugged his shoulders.

"I always did hate a cold plunge," he said, pinching a cigarette into shape. "Besides, it was too precarious."

"Bah!" she said, perching her toes on the brass fender. "What a coward you are, Geoffrey! You are not in love, then?"

She eyed him curiously from under her heavy brows, and Taunton looked down.

"Love?" he said slowly. "As to that, I — can never love any one but you, Nana."

She burst out laughing.

"Oh, no!" she said, shaking her handsome head. "That farce was played long ago. But upon my soul, I wonder at you. If you are not in love, what is it? Miss Eyre is quite poor—isn't she?"

"Oh, well! I'm not such a beggar as I used to be, Nana, in the old London days, when——"

"Hush!" she cried warningly. "What a fool you are, Geoffrey! Why don't you go home? What are you hanging about here for?"

"You are so irresistible," said he coolly as he struck a match and lit his cigarette. "But I am going now. Good-night, Mrs. Tremaine. When am I to have the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Blount?"

She shrugged her shoulders and got up impatiently.

"For Heaven's sake, go!" she said, with obvious annoyance.

Taunton laughed impertinently, and taking his hat, he sauntered away.

CHAPTER VII.

Ten days after the much-talked-of ice party at Tally-ho, Mr. Blount was breakfasting *tête-à-tête* with his house-keeper.

"Well," he said, stirring his coffee with great glee as he threw down the morning paper. "Llewellyn has sold his Y. & C., and has cleared fifty thousand."

Mrs. Tremaine dropped her napkin with a start.

"Has he been speculating?" she asked quickly.

"I should say so! And a nice little deal he has made of it. They say on 'Change that Taunton's on the other side of the fence and has lost heavily. But he's not a fellow to squeal. You'll never hear a word of it from Taunton."

Mrs. Tremaine's eyes lighted strangely.

"How much do you think he has lost?" she asked.

"Oh, I don't know. Jefferies says he's lost everything, but you can't rely on what you hear in the street. Taunton's not fool enough to let himself in that deep."

Mrs. Tremaine made no reply. The door opened, and Antoinette Eyre, pale and languid from a recent illness, came in.

"Well, young lady!" said Mr. Blount cordially. "How do you find yourself this morning?"

"Quite well, I thank you. I am just as well as I ever was."

"Mrs. Tremaine tells me you are going to leave Tally-ho to-day. Well, I suppose you *are* tired of us."

"Not at all!" Antoinette said hastily. "You have been so good to me!"

"Not so good as somebody else, though eh, Mrs. Tremaine?"

He glanced over to the buffet on which there was standing a basket of hot-house grapes surmounted by a bunch of Jacques roses bearing Geoffrey Taunton's card.

"Those came for you this morning," said Mrs. Tremaine carelessly. "Would you like some of the grapes for your breakfast?"

"It is very kind of Mr. Taunton!" Antoinette said gathering up the roses and burying her nose in their dewy depths. Taunton had sent her something every morning since she had been ill; but that morning for the first time, she had heard from Llewellyn. He had asked for her, but that was all. Now his card came in before she was through breakfast.

"Heavens!" said Mrs. Tremaine, shrugging her shoulders. "What does the man mean by coming before breakfast?"

"It is after ten," Antoinette remarked. "Will you see him, Mr. Blount?"

"Yes," said the old gentleman, rising eagerly. "I'd like very much——"

"I'm afraid you will be *de trop*, Mr. Blount," said Mrs. Tremaine with a short laugh. "You would better come out on the terrace with me, and have a cigar."

Antoinette started to say something, but Mrs. Tremaine shook her finger at her.

"Oh, you young girls!" she cried. "You are quite bewildering with your love affairs."

Mr. Blount sat down again.

"Confound it, madam," he said testily,

"A woman can't marry more than one man at once."

"Indeed, Mr. Blount—" Antoinette began.

"Don't keep him waiting," he said peremptorily. "Go and see him—go on!"

Mrs. Tremaine laughed again, though Antoinette was vexed. Llewellyn, however was glad enough to see Antoinette alone.

"You sent for me!" he said by way of salutation.

"Yes! I have not seen you since—since that awful night," Antoinette replied. "I have never even thanked you, and they tell me that you risked your life to save mine."

"As to that," Llewellyn answered un- easily, "I hope you will not embarrass me with gratitude. It was mere humanity. I could not see you drown without raising a hand to help you."

"Nobody else seemed to feel the same humane obligation," Antoinette said gently. "I know that I owe you my life, and you must at least let me thank you."

Llewellyn bowed.

"Are you quite well again?" he asked.

"Quite well—oh, yes! But—" she hesitated—"there is something else that I want to say to you. I—I am afraid I was rude to you on the night of the ice-party. The fact is, Leigh,—I—I did you an injustice. Some one told me you had been drinking, and——"

"Who told you that?" he demanded, turning upon her fiercely. "Was it Taunton?"

"No—oh, no! But you must not ask me. Only—they told me that, and——"

"You believed it!" he said scornfully.

"What an opinion you have of me!"

"I did not want to believe it," she urged, "but you know how it is when some one who ought to know insists upon a thing and you cannot contradict it. Besides, you *did* act strangely—that is, so differently from what you used to, that—that——"

Llewellyn had grown very white. He did not attempt to clear himself, but Antoinette added quickly:

"I found out afterwards that I had wronged you, and—and—I am very sorry."

Llewellyn was still silent.

"Will you forgive me?" she asked timidly.

"Oh, certainly!"

"Will you forget it?" she persisted.

"It is not easy to forget such things—coming from you."

"I wish you would try—for my sake," she said softly.

Llewellyn walked to the window and looked out. What did she mean by that gentle, alluring manner? Was her coquetry deeper than he had supposed?

"There is one thing more," she added.

"You asked me that night whether I was engaged to Mr. Taunton, and I refused to tell you. I don't know why I did that, for he has never even asked me to marry him."

Llewellyn turned around and looked at her long and steadily.

"Antoinette," he said in a low, tense tone, "tell me something more. Has Mr. Blount—has anyone told you of what has happened to me?"

"About your speculations?" she asked quite innocently. "Yes! Mr. Blount told me yesterday. I am very glad. I congratulate you."

His lip curled disdainfully, but he was silent. Antoinette was so guiltless of the

base purpose of which he suspected her, that she never dreamed of what he was thinking.

"You deserve success, Leigh," she said kindly. "I am glad it has come to you so soon."

"Thank you!" was his dry response.

"Success is a relative term, however. There are some grasping creatures in this world who ask for something better than money, and, when money comes to them without anything else, it seems of very little value."

"I am sure you will be happy some day," she said hopefully, but Llewellyn had nothing to answer.

Mr. Blount came in presently. He could not stand the restriction put upon him by Mrs. Tremaine, and he came in to congratulate Llewellyn. Antoinette had no chance to say anything else to him in private. He left early and she saw him start down the driveway *en route* for Taunton's office with a sinking heart. She had left something unsaid which she had meant to say. Just what it was she could not have told; but, as she looked after Llewellyn's retreating form, she felt that she had lost an opportunity.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



Ralph of Ashmead.

A TALE OF VIRGINIA.

BY OLIVIA LOVELL WILSON.

PART II.

OSWALD called cheerfully for the ghost, and lifted Ralph's blue cloak from the ground. Ralph claimed it quietly. He felt Roger Templeton was watching him even in the uncertain flare of the torches.

"Some one has been here recently," cried Oswald, in triumph; "someone else hath our secret, Ralph. See, a fire has been laid. No wonder the darkeys say Master Ashmead keeps a ghost."

"No ghost built that fire," quoth Roger Templeton, pointing to the scattered embers; "let us return at once and inform Allyn Ashmead his grounds are made a lurking place for thieves or traitors. By your leave, young gentles, I will see ye *all* leave this cell before I go."

He spoke so sternly, and pointed back along the passage as he did so, that the motley group in gay tinsel and silk sank away before him. Albeit Roger was a small man, his moments of dignity were impressive. But Ralph stood motionless. He had sought Lille once more, and she stood close at his side.

"Take off the lady's mask," said Templeton, coldly.

Lille did so herself, casting an appealing glance at Ralph.

"Follow the others."

And in silence they obeyed him, walking side by side through that dim passage, feeling Roger Templeton too near to utter one word of hope or despair.

But as they came into the brilliant hall once more, Ralph drew the girl to him, and walked to where his father sat; with Roland at his side.

"Father," he said, in a clear, high tone, "dost thou not remember the little maiden with whom I played when a lad, Lille of the Mill, we called her. She now seeks thy protection. To thy hands I commend her, and charge thee to forget all save her loneliness, and the sad fate that hath overcome her people. Do this if in thy heart there yet remains love for thy younger son."

Allyn Ashmead arose in surprise, and would have spoken kindly to the shrink-

ing girl, when Roger Templeton dropped a heavy hand on Ralph's shoulder, and whirling the young couple apart, said in a voice of thunder:

"And I charge thee, Allyn Ashmead, that thou harbor no traitor. Yonder is Thomas Hansford's sister, and I arrest thee, Ralph of Ashmead, in the name of the king. If thou doubttest me—behold!"

He held up a white cross, dashed with scarlet, and while Ralph grew white and twisted his shoulder from the iron grip of Roger's hand, he was but in time to catch the fainting form of Lille Hansford, as blessed unconsciousness darkened her sight, blotting out the awful fate that seemed hanging over them.

III.

But as Ralph had said, the Governor of Virginia waged no war on women. Roger Templeton's ire was for the youthful rebel, who then and there proudly reclaimed the badge of his apostasy, and with uplifted head awaited his sentence. Only a quiver of the eyelid betrayed his agitation, as the women lifted Lille from his arms and bore her away.

He looked his father in the eyes steadily, and put up a warning hand when Roland cried out some mistake had been made. His brother was no traitor.

"Speak! if you have aught to say," broke forth Allyn Ashmead, anger and grief struggling within him.

"Except to clear my father and brother of suspicion, I have naught to say."

"Thou—thou, traitor to thy king? 'Tis madness, Ralph, what folly hath lead thee——"

"No folly, but an eye that sees, and a heart that judges, and while it is full of love and life, throbs for friends laid low by treachery. Oh! my father, forgive me, that I cause thee this shame and woe, but for thee I care not what becomes of me."

Allyn Ashmead turned a stern white face away from the beseeching misery of his youngest born.

"Do thy duty, Templeton. No hand of mine shall be lifted to save him."

"Father!" It was Roland who spoke. He knew so well how many young hearts were in sympathy with Ralph since Thomas Hansford's ruthless fate. He also knew too well the cruel rage of the old Governor. But Allyn Ashmead motioned him to silence.

"Henceforth he is no child of mine. I have no younger son; in his place I have a traitor,"

Ralph still knelt where he had sunk when making his one appeal to his father. Templeton called to him two servants, and bade Ralph rise, while they bound a leather thong about his arms, pinioning them firmly. The guests, awed and frightened, were huddled at one end of the room, but Oswald rushed impetuously forward.

"Ralph, 'twas I betrayed thee—forgive me," he cried. Ralph smiled a little mournfully and shook his head, and whispered one word softly to his cousin.

"Lille!" was all he said.

"And now," quoth Roger Templeton, with a satisfied air. "Now good young Master Ashmead, where lyeth Drummond concealed?"

Ralph started; a quiver ran through his frame, and his eye flashed. Then he was to be but the tool to bring forth that worthier rebel, Lille's kinsman, from whose hand he had that day received his fair lady.

Not a word replied Ralph of Ashmead.

"You refuse to tell us where we may find this arch-traitor? Roland Ashmead, thou see'st what a viper hath been nourished in our midst. He knows, but will not speak. So, so, my brave youth, the Governor hath medicine for such minds. We'll rack thee, ere we hang thee."

A keen defiance shot from Ralph Ashmead's eyes. He had met his brother's troubled glance; he knew there was no hope of rescue; but he felt no quailing fears.

Templeton turned to his host.

"Most grieved am I, good Sir, to despoil so fair a scene, but I have long suspected thy son. When he relinquishes his knowledge to serve the Governor and King, thou mayst see him again. But until then, bid him farewell. Believe me, thy house and kin are exempt from any suspicion of complicity with his evil ways."

"Go thy way," said Allyn Ashmead proudly, turning no glance upon his son. "Both King and Governor know the heart of Allyn Ashmead. As readily as either of my sons are given to his service, do I condemn this one to die, as is fitting his offence. Go! I would not look upon his face again!"

And forth from the room; from the warm light of welcome, amidst sobs from the maidens, and sullen glances of remonstrance from the youths, walked Ralph Ashmead, with a firm step, to meet his doom.

Roland Ashmead understood better than anyone present the nature of all that had occurred. His blood boiled when he knew to what an end Roger Templeton had used his friendship, for Roland had long known and guarded Ralph's tendencies, hoping like a clever diplomat, that affairs would turn in a manner to lead Ralph gracefully from rebellion, to glad submission. He had trusted Roger to overlook in Ralph's youth, what he knew well was the sentiment of many others in the little court of Governor Berkeley. More than all else Roland knew that Ralph had been shaken by the execution of Thomas Hansford.

Under that Spartan exterior, the eldest son felt his father's heart was breaking; and how could he ever meet that sweet sister's glance, when next they met, if he failed to succor Ralph in this sad hour.

Heeding little his wife's indignant words, he strove to find Lille Hansford. He too remembered when this girl and her brother had been Ralph's fond mates. Lille of the Mill, the wildest, merriest girl, full of jests, and daring as a boy. She must know also something of this William Drummond. Could Roland but secure this man, he felt he would overreach Roger Templeton, and perhaps bargain for Ralph's release. At any other time Roland Ashmead would have shrunk from delivering any man to the unconquerable fury of the Governor. Royalist he had ever been, but he also had been disgusted and moved by the cruelty displayed toward the brave men, who, in following Bacon, had but upheld what seemed to them the right cause. Least of all did Roland Ashmead desire to capture William Drummond. Kinsman of

the woman now beneath his roof, friend of his boyhood, a man beyond all others worthy of respect, Roland Ashmead thrust these thoughts resolutely aside. If he would strive to deliver his foolish brother from his impending danger, he must forget all save the ties of blood.

He knew Governor Berkeley would give much to hang this last rebel of the government.

Lille started up at sight of Roland. She had recovered consciousness, and was lying in Sylvia's arms, while the latter, weeping copiously, begged her not to die.

"Ralph!" cried the girl, raising imploring hands to the stern-browed brother.

"Lille, I little thought to greet thee thus. Thou hast wrought evil as usual with thy recklessness. Tell me, where is thy kinsman, William Drummond?"

"Oh, Roland, what wouldst thou," she cried. "Now that my presence hath brought ruin to Ralph, wouldst have me betray another to death? Oh! coward, coward, that I have been."

"Tell me, will Drummond expect Ralph's aid in an escape?" asked Roland eagerly.

"I tell thee nothing," cried the girl firmly. "Beat me if thou wilt! Send me to Governor Berkeley. I pray thee let me share the fate of those who love not the king; but ask me no more questions, Roland Ashmead."

"Dost think thou servest Ralph by silence? I tell thee I cannot move hand or foot until I know if he screens Drummond. Speak, then, I charge thee. Where lurks this man? Must my blood be sacrificed to preserve thine?"

Lille turned a pale, resolute countenance upon him. Her eyes glowed fiercely; but she uttered not a word.

Sylvia had walked to some distance, and Roland's eye now fell on her.

"Come hither," he said. "Tell me what thou knowest. Out with it, girl, or I will have thee whipped. Disgrace hath fallen on thy master; possibly death may be his portion—answer me if thou knowest where he hath hidden another fugitive. Sylvia, dost heed me?"

He shook the girl as he spoke, but in a moment Sylvia was whirled the length of the room, and Lille stood under his hand, her angry glance meeting his in rebuke.

"For shame, Roland, to threaten a woman—Sylvia knows no answer to thy threat. She knows nothing save her master's sore need. I alone can help thee—and I—must be silent."

"By Heaven, thou shalt live to repent it then," cried Roland, and flung himself from the room, sore perplexed, until he bethought him of his brother's other servant. Sambo was called and impressed with the idea he could render his master's safety by confessing all he knew. It was little enough, for Ralph had used much caution during his interview with Drummond. But Roland thought he held a clue, and mounting, rode away with Sambo, while Lille Hansford paced the room allotted her, and watched with envy the tears that fell so readily from Sylvia's eyes. Oh! that she too might weep and find relief. But only action could bring rest from the fears crowding upon her.

* * * * *

That night when Ralph Ashmead drove his dagger to the heart of the man who would have betrayed him; William Drummond felt no greater proof was needed of Ralph's utter fidelity. He therefore broken in spirit, and glad of a younger shoulder to lean upon, accepted Ralph's suggestion, and with his two followers, skirted the Ashmead estate, and found the deserted hut. There, wrapped in gloomy thought, he awaited the dawn, and cared little what came.

One by one he had seen his comrades overtaken and promptly executed. Hope had deserted him. There seemed nothing left to live for, now that Ralph had borne from his side the girl for whom he had promised protection.

Perhaps his conscience woke somewhat in those silent hours, and he recognized that he and Lawrence had not been so purely unselfish in the cause as their noble generous leader, Nathaniel Bacon. As it was, the dawn found him sunk in an exhausted slumber, from which he awoke to hear without the hut, a voice demanding admittance.

"It is Ashmead," said one of the followers, rising to admit the new-comer. But Drummond withheld him. A strange light broke over his face, a softened expression. Again the voice without demanded entrance.

Drummond rose slowly.

"Bid him enter," he said, and stood with folded arms, and head erect, to confront not Ralph's youthful gaze, but the severe countenance of Roland Ashmead.

The men looked at each other, long. Then Drummond, with still that gentle expression, said :

"Thou, Roland, hath won. Exult in thy victory. I am thy prisoner."

Roland Ashmead turned aside, with a deep sigh.

"Thou hast made me thy fate. Will Drummond, I wish thou hadst died the day I lifted thee from the stream, rather than lived to cross my path again. Know 'tis a brother's life hangs on thy capture, nor think I can falter now, in giving thee over to thy doom?"

"What sayest thou? Ralph, who hath betrayed the boy! What? have I caused the house of Ashmead deeper woe? Roland, I knew thy voice, and felt how keen would be thy grief, to find my life in thy hand. But now—"

"As thou art the man I once loved with all my soul—" began Roland.

"And love yet, oh, Roland," cried the other, in a broken tone, "love so well, thou shalt still find me worthy thy regard. Bind my hands, do with me as thou wilt. Teach me how to save thy brother."

"There is but one way. *Thou* art his ransom. For thee and thine he suffers disgrace—"

"And for *him*, I will suffer death. Lead the way, Roland Ashmead. I follow thee."

And side by side the men rode back to Ashmead, the prisoner with a calm, uplifted face; while Roland Ashmead's was sunk upon his breast, in sorrow for his once dear friend.

But there was no time for sorrow now, for even should Roland's desire to place Drummond in Ralph's stead prove effectual, Ralph stood in much danger.

Roland must push his already spent horses to reach Ashmead and make the twenty-five mile journey to Jamestown. But, on reaching Ashmead, fresh difficulties awaited him. The Ashmead stables afforded but a meagre supply of horses, since Allyn Ashmead, in his zeal, had furnished the Governor with many a mount for his officers, during the late rebellion.

To Roland's dismay, no horse seemed in condition for the long journey to Jamestown and beyond to "Green Spring," the Governor's residence.

Night was once more approaching. In order to disturb as little as possible his old father and greatly perturbed wife, Roland had lodged his prisoner in a remote tower, at the end of the mansion, and he now struggled alone with his difficulties, followed through the stables by a train of anxious darkeys, who watched his countenance intently.

Turning to cross the yard in despair he beheld a horseman riding toward him.

A messenger from Jamestown had sped hither, riding hard with a packet for the Governor's secretary. He had missed Roger Templeton on the road, and sought Roland in haste. Governor Berkeley had ridden forth two days before on a fancied clue to Drummond's lurking place. Not having yet returned, and in the present confused condition of affairs, the messenger had been sent pell mell to the Governor's representative, Roland Ashmead. The papers had arrived from England but two hours when he set forth. He also brought the rumor that three men were to be hung Christmas morn, and that Roger Templeton was to provide a fourth victim, no other than the person of William Drummond.

A thrill shot through Roland as he heard this rumor, and he hastily turned aside to open the packet. Then with an exclamation he sprang forward, and turning to the messenger, said eagerly :

"Can you ride swiftly back—as for your life, and take this paper to Templeton or the Governor?"

"Not I, sir; my horse is dead lame!"

"And every horse in the stable more or less spent. Good God! what shall I do. Release for both, reprieve, and no way to send it thither. Is there no man or servant that knoweth where I can procure three horses, fresh and swift?"

"I will carry that paper, sir," cried a clear voice, as a slender lad bent before Roland. His clothes hung rather loosely on him, and his hat was pulled low over his forehead.

"Thou stripling! What meanest thou," cried Roland eagerly; "hast a horse? Thou art so light thou couldst

ride the devil's steed and she not feel thee. Quick men—Sambo—is my brother's mare in the stable? I saw her not? This lad is so light perhaps she'll bear him hither. It must be done. Great God! that I should be forced to leave such an errand to a lad. Speak! whence comest thou?"

"From Jamestown, yester eve."

"And the countersign?"

"For King and Home."

"Thou art right. Good. Take these despatches straight to Green Spring, and place in the hands of Templeton or the governor. Guard them as thou wouldst thy life. It contains the pardon of King Charles for all who took part with Bacon. May Heaven bless his royal clemency. If thou arrive in time mayst save those men about to hang, and make glad a Christmas morning. More than all else, remember *this*, boy, save my brother."

As Roland talked with the lad, Sambo and the crowd of eager servants brought out the mare. She was the only horse who had not been forth that day, and she came with a light step and arched neck.

The slender boy made a quick move to mount the horse.

"Hold," cried Roland, "thy name?"

"Hugh Moreland."

"And think not I will let thee forth save under the king's oath for thine errand. Swear by thy fealty to king and state——"

"Not I, Roland Ashmead; these papers," he tapped his doublet, where they were now concealed, "carry in them release for kinsman and friend. I need no oath to king or governor to steel my heart and hand. Look in my face, and say if thou thinkest I will betray thy brother?" He lifted the battered hat from his curling love-locks, sprang lightly to the mare's back, and with a ringing shout of "King and Home," Lille Hansford rode forth to save her lover and her kinsman.

Roland reeled back in amazement. He seized the gaping Sambo savagely.

"Who rode hence?" he cried, not believing his own eyes.

"Su'ah sir, an' if 'tain't Massa Ralph's bride, den its de debbil, and I tink it's boff, fur *she* kin cuff like Massa Ralph hisself. And it ain't nedder, den don't

you fret, Massa Rolan', she'll *git dar*, or *she'll* kill the mare."

IV.

While Sylvia wept bitterly for the young master whom she loved, Lille had but one moment of irresolution. She hastily divested herself of the long black robe she wore, shook down her short crop of black curls and appeared to the startled gaze of Sylvia, a trim young lad, and demanded she should find her a black hat that would serve her purpose. At Sylvia's wide-eyed amaze she waxed impatient, and shaking the girl by the arm cried:

"Haste thee, I say. Dost think I served my brother until three days before his execution in this guise, to falter in wearing it now, in behalf of thy master? I will go to him; better die now, with him, than stay here to betray another to death. Get me a hat, I tell thee. Anything I can pull low over my brow, and then to the stables."

In sooth to Sylvia, the transformation of character seemed as entire as the garb. Lille seemed the impatient youth she looked, and Sylvia obeyed her without a murmur, watching the while the quick stride, and altered mien of the young woman, as if she expected every moment to see her revert to her former estate.

But Lille went straight to the stables.

There she had the good mare Reneé led out, and rubbed and groomed, and 'twas thus Roland failed to find the mare in his round of the stables later.

Reneé already stood equipped to bear Lille away, and only the chance of ascertaining whether Roland captured her cousin, led Lille to linger in an agony of waiting. There was one last hope even then, that she, Lille Hansford, might risk with Governor Berkeley, and this she resolved to accomplish.

When Roland made that call, however, her quick nature sprang to greet it, and now she was off.

Reneé, eager and fleet under her light weight; the road a white line between the great dark forest trees, Jamestown and Green Spring twenty-five miles away.

In the gathering gloom of the early dusk the wind rose sighing, through the bare branches overhead. A lonely owl flew cross the way with lugubrious cry,

and woke the hollow echoes. Later, the flash and gleam of the wildcat's eye, shone forth from the wayside, and in the shadows might lurk, keen of ear, and quick at aim, the savage, who had cost the colony of Virginia her bravest men, and crushed with anguish her fairest daughters.

Lille heard, saw, comprehended naught, save in the quick forward leap of the good mare she bore those tidings from the King of England to release four souls from death.

Beside the road, some travelers had encamped, and cried out, "What news sped so fast at night?"

"For King and Home, and the innocent set free!" was the cry borne back to them, as the rider checked not speed and rein.

They reached the bridge, this side the Welton ford. Good Heaven, forefend! Why did the mare pause and rear? snorting in alarm. On—on, good Reneé, no pause now! What frights thee? oh! the bridge is half gone. But one leap, and thou'lt reach the other side—to it, Reneé—'tis to save thy master!"

Ah! like a bird she leaps the chasm, and on they speed once more, Lille's hand upon the mare's neck, in grateful caress, and Green Spring but fifteen miles away.

On past fields of corn; fields where Lille hath played, with light step, culling flowers, down to the water's brim. Bare fields of stubble now, and icy rims upon the river. Through lanes where, lingering in days but shortly past, she scouted Roger Templeton's elderly suit. Those free days when, with Puritans in power, Will Drummond played a part better suited to him than fugitive.

Good Reneé, never flag. Ah! see'st thou not the journey is near ended? Think on thy master's need. Already Templeton may spend his jealous spleen on that dear traitor. Oh, never flag now, with uneven step.

No! once more she lifts hoof with steady pace—what matters how one foot goes limping, she slacks not speed.

See! yonder light is Jamestown—one poor, feeble light where a hundred lights have guided travelers to a welcome.

"Halt! Who goes so fast?"

"Out of my path, man! I ride for the king."

"The countersign?"

"For King and Home."

"Prythee, whose horse ride ye!"

"'Tis not for thee to ask. Unhandle my bridle."

"Thou saucy varlet? I mistrust 'tis not safe to let thee pass. The right honorable Governor put me here on guard—"

"And I'll put thee on thy back, if thou detain me longer. I must reach the Governor ere day-break. Fall back!"

"Not so fast. Thou hast a pretty voice, I'll see thy face."

"That, for thy sorrow. Reneé, on!"

An oath, and the gossiping guard reels back, his face full of glass from his splintered lantern, and far down the street good Reneé speeds, her rider stern and eager with Green Spring but ten miles away!

But those miles, how long they stretch when the smouldering ruins of Jamestown are past. Past with a shudder the houses of Drummond and Lawrence, ashes now, like the hopes of those who reared them. Weary, Reneé, lame and spent. Oh! speed yet good mare—sweet Reneé! see, the day is peeping along the Eastern sky, flinging a scarlet ribbon about the horizon. 'Tis but a little distance—is not that curling smoke from Green Spring roof?

Only a little hill, Reneé, Heavens! art down? No, up again, ne'er stumble, tis but four miles—three—two—there, there, for "King and Home!" cry out oh! Lille, in triumph, for thy journey is ended and thy goal won.

White with foam, trembling in limb, with quivering flank and panting nostrils, Reneé feels the arms about her neck, the kiss and warm tears of her dauntless rider, and looks at her with mute and blood-shot eyes. Reneé is ruined, but she has won the race—and will it save her master?

With eager haste Lille seeks the servants' quarters. Too well she knows the grounds at Green Spring. It was here she heard her brother pass his mockery of a trial.

Sending someone to the poor mare, she rushed to the Hall.

The door was opened by a garrulous

old English butler, about whom Lille had heard little save quizzing and laughter.

"Thou wouldst see his lordship, the Governor? and a pretty time o' day to ask it. Who art thou? Whence cometh? lookest like a slip of a gal, and acteth like a man, forsooth. Where's thy beard?"

"I come with the message of Roland Ashmead to the Governor."

"Perhaps thou hast a rebel or two in thy pocket—eh? if so wilt be welcome, for my lord be vexed enough because Templeton hath brought instead of Drummond the youthful Ashmead, with a face smooth as thine, but an eye like a hawk, and a device for keepin' his mouth closed, and the Governor is wroth with him and Templeton and the lot, and swears at Ashmead's absence."

A quiver ran through his listener.

"Hast seen Templeton's prisoner? 'tis not Drummond?" she asked in feigned surprise.

"I tell thee 'tis that young blade, Ashmead, brother to Roland, and he won't tell where Will Drummond lies, and the Governor saith he'll try the whipping-post with such a youth before he will hang him. Odds me! but he spoke bravely back to him though!" wagging his head in admiration, "and my Lord said since he had such courage mayhap he was provided that he should die in the same. Ever for a joke is Lord Berkeley."

"Thou must not keep me longer waiting. Go to my Lord at once, and tell him I bring despatches sent to him, but forwarded to Roland Ashmead."

"Eh? is it true then? Despatches came on the good ship *Hope*, and my Lord was not here. He but returned last night, and now——"

"Prythee, have done, and do my errand! It behooveth thee to have a nimble step and feebler tongue. Begone, to my Lord."

"Tut, tut, young fire-eater, thou wilt threaten, wilt thou. Hast a pretty dagger? Well—well—I'll to it, though I doubt if he'll see thee."

So with impatient pacing Lille awaited his coming, stemming the tide of Andrew's words by a flat request for silence, to that worthy's great prejudice.

Now, when Roger Templeton had

brought Ralph Ashmead to Green Spring, treating him with every indignity he could well heap upon him, he avenged two sources of unrest, in his peculiar nature.

Aside from his unrequited love for Lille Hansford in days past, he loved Roland Ashmead as few men love each other. Therefore he had always been wildly jealous of Ralph, his younger brother. This small man compressed so much bitter jealousy in his equally small stature, that his total distraction through the means of this quality had more than once threatened him.

That moment in the hermit's cell, when he saw in Ralph a rival in the affection of both the persons he adored, riveted the link in the chain he had long endeavored to forge about Ralph's free and haughty footsteps.

Fancy, then, his chagrin, when Lord Berkeley, vexed, and sore with disappointment, treated Ralph's defection as that of a boy, and gave Roger Templeton such a rousing piece of his august mind in the matter, that Templeton retired full of wrath, and sulked until sent for early the following morning, to meet with Lord Berkeley, a message from Roland Ashmead.

Wondering what word Roland would send hither, glowing angrily that Ashmead, being so near the English throne through Lord Moray, should thus be leniently dealt with, Roger bustled forth, and found his lordship hastening to greet the messenger, in only the regalia of his dressing-room, since he wore his flowered chamber-gown, and his cap of black silk still adorned his hoary head, albeit somewhat awry.

Templeton did not speak. He bit his lips sullenly, after a careless glance at the stripling messenger.

"Thou comest from Ashmead? What message hast thou? Hast Roland found an Oliver for this brother of his, brought hither by Templeton? Speak! Comest thou with news of Drummond?"

Lille sunk down on one knee before him.

"My lord, I do bring thee news of William Drummond," she said.

"Then never hang thy head like that, lad," cried the Governor, slapping her

shoulder, "if that be so, and I live to hang him, I'll *make* thee, my man; I'll *make* thee. Where is he?"

"My lord, but yesterday the house of Ashmead was accused of treachery, and the younger son dragged hither. Dost think a traitor can lurk in that house, when Roland Ashmead holds as prisoner William Drummond?"

"Is't so?" The old lord rubbed his hands in delight. "Nay, we know Ashmead is no traitor, and, for the younger son, I mistrust he is only over-young, a fault we'll *cure*, if time doeth not its work. What more hast thou to tell me?"

"Do I understand, my lord, thou exonerest Ashmead and his house from blame, and wilt release the younger son?"

"Thou seemest over-bold, young sir. Who told thee to stipulate for terms? Ashmead knoweth my humor. If I choose to shoot or hang the rebel, what is it to thee?"

"What treason canst thou bring against him, pray thee, good my lord?"

"Vex me not with questions, I tell thee, or I'll have thee whipped for it; to thy errand. Where is William Drummond?"

"At Ashmead, under ward and key."

"And he shall hang."

"Never, my lord." The ringing tone sounded like a trumpet on the waking ear of Roger Templeton. "I here place in your hands that which renders the king's servants *all* free. It is no treason to befriend the followers of Bacon, since so declared by Charles of England. Read, my lord, his blessed royal message."

The change from eagerness to anxiety, from anxiety to white amazement on the face of the governor and his servant as they caught the despatches from the messenger's hand was but a slight reward for the worn but victorious girl.

She saw the color fly to Templeton's face, and heard him cry excitedly:

"My lord, these despatches are authentic, but the messenger—if thou believest not how false Ralph Ashmead to his father's house and cause; bring him forth now; let *him* tell thee who is his brother's messenger."

"Come, what meanest thou," bawled the Governor, turning his fury suddenly upon Templeton, glad of an excuse to vent the anger and disgust within him;

"wilt forever flaunt thy tempers in my presence, thou sulking, jealous, foolish, old blustering chimney. What, Andrew Gildersleeve, art napping, thou lazy varlet. Go, bid them bring Ralph Ashmead hither. I'll have thee humored, thou gouty whiner; to dare bluster in *my* presence. Come hither, boy; thou, too, shalt show him thy metal."

"Oh, my lord, my lord," cried Lille, now trembling before the mighty storm thus raised, and covered with confusion that she so must confront her lover.

"My lord me no my lords. What, wouldst thou too turn sniveller? Canst not bear the sight o' Ashmead, either? Here, here, Ralph Ashmead, your hand, my man. Here are two culprits, fain would confess their sins. Identify yon lad, and thus gratify this—gentleman."

The infuriated old Governor flung out the word, scattering a shower of contemptuous snuff toward Templeton, as he dug prodigiously into his snuff box at every exclamation.

Worn and white, defiant and miserable, Ralph came upon the scene, scarcely realizing that his hitherto fettered wrists were free, anticipating another attempt to involve him in a betrayal of Lille Hansford's kinsman.

He heard the Governor's words, but did not understand their meaning.

He stood gazing at the drooping figure of the lad, whose face mantled with burning blushes, until the old Lord roared again:

"Art dumb, thou dolt! Speak! Who stands there like a guilty thief! Was't so bold last night to have no tongue to-day?"

"I'll tell thee my lord! cried Roger, yonder stands the sister of Thomas Hansford.

The old Governor reeled back with a muttered oath, and pale face, as if the ghost of the hanged man had suddenly confronted him.

"Good God!" he cried, but Ralph sprang forward at Roger's tone.

"Hold! my lord," he cried, "she is of the house of Ashmead, for if I never claim my birthright more—to-day I claim it for my wife!"

And with his arm about the fainting form of Lille, he turned to confront the other men.

But Roger had rushed with an oath from the room, and the old Governor after one quick turn up and down, stopped before the young couple, and lowering his voice said:

"'Twas well said, young Sir, we will forget who brothered her; thou hast a brave sweetheart, and one for whom thou hast come nigh unto death. Bear her hence in peace, and God speed ye. Wilt thou?"

He politely tendered his jeweled snuff-box, but Ralph neither heard nor saw it, for her hard-won task accomplished all the woman in Lille Hansford re-asserted itself, and sobbing and trembling she lay upon her lover's breast, while with whispered endearments he sought to sooth her.

And as they stood thus, beneath the window broke forth the Christmas Waits, and sang right lustily:

"God rest ye merry gentlemen,
May nothing you dismay;
For Christ the Lord our Saviour,
Was born on Christmas Day."

"God bless my soul!" cried the old Governor, taking his snuff vigorously, "Methinks I grow old. This is forgetting confession and early mass. Come, lead the lady forth Ralph Ashmead. My priest shall shrive ye both, and wed ye, as I'll be bound ye had no leave or license for the bond before. This is Christmas, therefore, a holy day. So, speed thee. Take the lady to my housekeeper, if she would doff that garb—she hath not shamed; and do thou, Ralph, meet me at the chapel in half an hour. I want a word with thee."

And so it fell out, that Ralph Ashmead and Lille Hansford were wed in the Governor's own chapel, and Ralph bore his bribe back to Ashmead ere nightfall, with a suave letter from Lord Berkeley to his brother Roland.

So dazed and happy were the young couple, they little heeded Roland's wondering comment on the Governor's conduct.

Allyn Ashmead followed readily his king's example, and forgave his son the treachery; all the more gladly that, since Roland had unburdened his mind, he felt he had good cause to rejoice in the clemency of King Charles. And, as to Ralph himself, he had already invested

the "Merry Monarch" with every virtue, and drank to the king in a manner that would have satisfied Roger Templeton of his loyalty, had he chanced upon the scene at Ashmead that Christmas night. And it was only Lille, close at her husband's side, who, still Puritan and king-hater at heart, slyly threw her wine upon the paved floor.

It was only by the light of the days that followed, that Roland Ashmead understood the wily old Governor's conduct. For it was when Berkeley knew Roland Ashmead to be so placed as to be unable to succor his friend, that he found the loop-hole in those papers Royal brought to Virginia by the good ship *Hope*.

Either the "Merry Monarch" had but faintly set forth his wishes, or his Premier had failed to legalize his statement so as to suit the old Governor's sense of lawful authority, at any rate when he met William Drummond, history tells us he greeted him with:—

"Ah, Drummond, art welcome! I am more glad to see thee than any other man in Virginia. Thou shalt die in half an hour!" *

And he made good his word, to the infinite horror of Puritan and Royalist alike.

It was on hearing this that Charles of England swore a large oath, exclaiming "why this old fool hath killed more men in that open country than I did for the murder of my father."

But for that Christmas night at Ashmead Roland cast aside all surmise, and strove to win a smile from the lips of his whilom captive, now his guest, William Drummond.

But Roland also felt it was not quite safe that Ralph with his fiery, outspoken temperament should remain in Virginia during these troubled times. Nor had he been blind, like Ralph, to the young wife's silent denial of the toast "For King and Home."

So when the good ship *Hope* sailed once more for England, she bore from Virginia's shore, Ralph Ashmead and his bride.

THE END.

* J. C. Cooke "Stories of the Old Dominion."
Henry Cabot Lodge, "English Colonies in America."

One New Year's Eve.

BY LILLIAN GREY.

A NEW year! Grandma Smith had seen fully seventy of them, and yet she was not weary of them, but had always a tender and hearty greeting for each one as it came.

She did not seem so old—to us, her granddaughters, for her heart had kept young. Yet not always had a new year brought her unmixed joy and blessing. She had found crosses to bear often-times. Once in a while her path had been furrowed by a grave across it, and then it had seemed for a time as if no year could ever bring comfort again.

But after all it was hard to find anyone with such a sweet and serene face as Grandma Smith, and no one was a more entertaining and genial companion than was she.

Two days before the last year closed she was sitting alone, looking along the path of the vanished years, when she was recalled to the present by the sound of girlish voices and laughter floating along the hallway, followed a moment later by the advent of three merry granddaughters.

"Oh, Grandma! we've got such a lovely plan!"

"And a favor to ask you, dear!" said another.

"And, Grandmamma, how sweet and lovely you do look!" exclaimed the third, clinging around her neck and kissing the dear face.

"Now, now, my dears! when you begin to flatter like that, you must have a great favor, indeed."

"So we have, Grandma. Well, you know to-morrow will be New Year's Eve, don't you?"

"Oh, yes. I was thinking of that, and of other New Year's Eves as you came rushing in.

"Yes: well now let's think only of this one coming. And we three are your very ownest, and dearest, and sweetest grandchildren, aren't we?"

"Granted! but what of that?"

"And you'd dearly love to do something to make us happy and our visit still

pleasanter than it is, wouldn't you, grandmamma?"

"Certainly! Then have I failed in some way?"

"Oh, no! no indeed! but we want something more. Can't we have a party—only a teeny little party that night? Just twenty or so of the young folks right around here that we know the best? Aunt Delia is perfectly willing; she said we could hear what you said about it."

"I intended to invite the young people before you went away, girls, but I had not thought of that night. You would want a dance and a supper, of course, or you wouldn't call it a party."

"Just a little bit of both, Grandma? We thought of some light refreshments that wouldn't be much trouble, for there is so little time, you know."

"Oh, that could be arranged well enough; but I don't like the fashion of dancing the Old Year out and the New Year in. It seems to me that is not the 'time to dance.' You know, my dears, that I don't frown down innocent gaiety, but yet it seems to me that the passing of one year and the coming of another, is a solemn time—a time for thought, for regret possibly, and surely for a prayer that we may keep the New Year more unsullied than the old one."

"Yes, Grandma! but then it is such a ghostly time to be alone, unless one is asleep, and it don't seem hardly respectful to sleep just then, either; so we thought we'd like a little company."

"Well, you may have the party, provided you stop dancing by half past eleven; and we must think out some way to pass the midnight suitably and pleasantly."

"But how, Grandmamma? You are such a good planner, you'll have to arrange that part. We could talk or sing, of course."

"Yes, singing is always in order, and there is one hymn I should like to have sung, 'God be with you till we meet again.' It is a hymn of benediction, and every verse expresses an appropriate wish or blessing for the New Year."

"Why, so it does; and we'll sing it, surely."

"And, dearies, suppose we have a resolution box? That will be very suitable, also."

"Gracious! What *is* a resolution box, grandma?"

"Well, something like this. Have as many slips of paper with a resolution or pledge, as you choose to call it, written on as there are people to take part. Number the folks, and as some one calls off the numbers, the owners draw one slip from the box. Then when all are distributed we'll have them read aloud, each reading his or her own."

"How nice; but what shall we put on the papers?"

"I faithfully promise this year to be patient." That will do for one, and for another this: 'I faithfully promise this year to be industrious.' Oh, you can think of plenty of good resolutions, unless the company is too large. It is a simple little game, of course, and yet I think it will pass a half hour very pleasantly."

"Indeed it will, and what fun if some certain ones get some certain papers; and we'll have something to remind each other of all the year, to say nothing of watching ourselves. How did you come to think of anything so nice, grandmamma?"

"Indeed. Must I give an account of my thoughts to you? Possibly it was an inspiration."

New Year's Eve found about twenty-five people assembled in Grandma Smith's pleasant parlors. The Christmas decorations were still in place, and added much to the festal appearance of the rooms.

The evening passed happily with chat and music and some dancing, winding up with the Virginia Reel, in which all, from youngest to oldest, took part.

Then refreshments were served, and soon after that the door-bell rang, and Norah appeared at the entrance, beckoned to Grandma Smith, and excitedly announced:

"A Gipsy woman, mum, this time o' night, an' she wants to tell all of yer fortunes."

This addition to the evening's entertainment was a complete surprise, and

questions and wondering exclamations went round the room.

The Gipsy was allowed to sit down in the hall, and one by one the bravest of the young people went out to have their fortunes told. She did not ask for silver to cross their palms, but said the good lady had made it right with her. As each one kept the secret of what she told them, of course it cannot be divulged here; but it is very likely that she foretold many good and pleasant things in the year to come, with possibly some kindly advice thrown in; and then she came to the parlor door, and said:

"Good night, and a good year to you all, pretty ladies and gentlemen, and remember the poor Gipsy."

Then she bowed herself out into the chill starlight; and if Grandma Smith knew who she was, or whence she came, or where she went, no one else was the wiser.

But it was nearly twelve o'clock, and so the company gathered round the piano, and sang the sweet benediction hymn:

"God be with you till we meet again,
'Neath His wings protecting hide you,
Daily manna still divide you,
God be with you till we meet again."

And as the verses went on, many beside grandma thought that there could be no better New Year wishes given or received than they expressed.

"With the oil of joy anoint you,
Sacred ministries appoint you,
When life's perils thick surround you,
May His arms of love be round you,
God be with you till we meet again."

And when, as the pretty bronze clock on the shelf began to strike the hour, some one opened the hall door and said, "Good bye, Old Year!" it seemed as if some bodily presence had indeed gone out from among them.

And then, suddenly, the fair young unsullied New Year was with them: and they could hear the bells ringing merrily in the village below, while each turned to the other with smile and hand-clasp and kindly words.

Then after a little a cedar, wood box was brought out and placed on the centre-table, and announced as the Resolu-

tion Box, which of course gave rise to a chorus of questions and comments.

After the explanation and numbering, each person went solemnly up and drew a folded slip of paper from the box, and it was curious to watch the varying expression of countenance as they read to themselves the promises they were to subscribe to.

After all had been supplied with slips, the leader requested No. 1 to arise and take his pledge.

Amid breathless silence, Harry Dean, a newly-fledged young lawyer, got on his feet and to the intense amusement of everyone, read gravely: "I faithfully promise *this* year to speak the truth!"

After the laughter had a little subsided No. 2 was called on. It proved to be Grandma Smith herself, who arose and read smilingly: "I faithfully promise this year to be generous!"

"Bless her!" whispered one and another; "when was she anything but generous?"

"Now we will hear from No. 3."

"Please mayn't I be excused?" begged Willie—good-natured, indolent Willie Cameron.

"No excuse, young man; you enlisted!"

Thus urged, Willie got up and read meekly,—and possibly with a mental reservation—the following: "I faithfully promise this year to be industrious!"

A shout of laughter greeted this announcement and only subsided to hear what No. 4 had to say.

The eldest granddaughter got up in response to this call, and after a side glance at Grandma, read in a determined tone: "I faithfully promise this year to think less of myself, and more of other people!" "A very laudable resolution, young lady! No. 5?" "I faithfully promise this year to be humble!" read the most audacious merry boy in the room:—"A regular Uriah Heep!" he added confidentially.

And so the slips were gone through, some of them fitting so aptly as to cause much fun and suggest design, although as they were shook up and drawn, that was impossible.

The party broke up about two o'clock in great merriment, each person declaring that they would not fail in reminding the others of their pledges; and all agreed in saying that it was the most pleasant way in which they had ever spent a New Year's Eve.

Major and Mrs. Hannibal Hawkins.

THEIR BRIDAL TOUR.

BY BELLE C. GREEN.

(Author of "A New England Conscience," "A New England Idyl," etc.)



AFTER the Major and me was engaged ter be married, and the weddin' day was set, we naterally begun to think about where we should go on our bridle toor.

Hannibal said how he couldn't take no extenewated toor intew furrin' parts, or so, because the busy time was comin' on pretty soon, and he must be to home tendin' tew his mill business.

"Fact is," says he, "I hadn't orter take scurce any toor at all jest now, for there's the mill, and there's Car'line all sole alone." (Car'line was his darter by his fust wife, you know.)

"We might dew like one couple I heard on," says I laughin', "that is go seperate on our toor. You go fust, and leave me ter home to look after things, and when you got back, I could go and have my weddin' toor."

Hannibal seemed ter think favorable at fust, but finally he says :

"No ! we'll go tergether or not at all, but we won't go fur. What say to New York City, Ruth Ann ?"

"I told him I was agreeable, but I'd heard it was a monster place ter spend money."

He said "no matter if it was, we didn't go on a bridle toor every day, and besides he meant ter take along some punkin sifter and sell enough to part pay expenses."

(I orter told you to begin with, that Major Hawkins is in the Punkin Sifter business, and sole inventor and proprietor 'o the celebrated *Hawkin's Punkin Sifter*—you've all seen it.)

I thought that idee 'o his'n was a bright and equinomical one, and I felt jest as he did about makin' most of our bridle toor, seein, we might never have another one.

We concluded we'd go out by boat, then if we wanted tew, we could come back on the cars. We had'nt ary one on us ever been on the salt water, an mother was dretful worried for fear we should be sea-sick.

She put us up half a dozen lemons and some codfish—she'd heard tell how they was good fer sea-sickness—and she charged us over'n over ter have life preservers handy night and day, in case 'o shipwrack or accident.

Wall, we took the boat at New London, and a queer boat it was ! It looked enough like a boat outside, fur's I know, bein' shaped some like Noah's Ark in the picter, but inside, my land ! it was more like a king's palace than anything else ; all white and gold, with beautiful car-pits, and velvit chairs, and curtins and everything ! Then there was black waiters more'n you could shake a stick at, standin' 'round in the way wherever you went.

I should judge there was a hundred rooms, big and little, for the passengers to sleep in (state-rooms they called 'em), they was fitted up nice and comfortable as you please, and I obsarved that the furnitoor was all nailed down tight, so that when the boat rocked and pitched, it would stay put, Hannibal said.

It was candle-light when we went on board, and pretty soon we begun ter feel as if we'd like a little somethin' to eat, so we went down into the dinin' room and had a nice supper. It seemed curi's enough ter be settin' there, eatin' and enjoyin' ourselves in that handsome room, and yet to know that at the same time we was sailin' 'way, 'way off on the water.

After supper we went out on deck. The moon was shinin', though every once in a while it would go behind a cloud ;

but it was beautiful, and Hannibal and me felt dretful cam and happy, our tew hearts beatin' as one, as it were.

We locked arms, and meandered 'round leisure like, a while, and finally set down and conversed tergether in low underground tones. (N. B.—I've noticed that well brought up folks never speak loud in company, 'less somebody's hard o' hearin'). Well, we set there talkin', and I s'pose I got uncommon sentimentle, 't any rate, I spoke out as I never felt ter speak before, and I says to Hannibal:

"Hannibal, I wonder if you feel to-night as I dew, that your bein' is at last complete, rounded out full, as it were—"

"Yes, yes—sartin," says Hannibal rubbin' his head in a dreamy sort o' way.

"And you are my twin soul and I am your'n," I continued pressin' the hand I held a little clos'ter. (You see I had read all this in a book—I'm a master hand to read.)

"What say? Twins, twins," says Hannibal, rousin' up. "Ain't you a *leetle grain* off, Ruth Ann? Twins is ginerally brother and sister, or brothers or sisters, or—or somethin'. And we wa'n't even borned the same day!"

"Oh, Hannibal" says I, "I spoke in a speritewal sense. I mean that you are my other half, and I'm your'n."

"Now I know what you're drivin' at," says he, "why didn't ye say in the fust place that you was my *better half* and I was your'n—though that goes without sayin', bein's we're married, I s'pose," and he laughed careless.

I hove a sigh. I couldn't help it. I begun ter see that it was jest barely possible that we shouldn't jibe tergether in our inmost souls, at all pints. But I de-tarmined to make the best o' my husband and not the wust, as some wives seem persessed ter dew.

"If he's only a good pervider and don't actilly git drunk, I can stan' it," says I ter myself. "It's better than bein' an old maid anyway," says I.

We didn't talk much more, but we con-tinuered to set for quite a while, 'till bimeby Hannibal turns to me all of a sudden and says:

"Ruth Ann, I don't feel very well somehow. I guess we'd better go inside."

I was on my "*kee veev*" in a minute. "Oh, dear, Hannibal!" says I, "I do hope you ain't goin' to be sea-sick,"

"Oh no, I guess not," says he. "I e't ruther hearty, and my stomach feels a little squeamy, that's all."

"Dear me!" thinks I. "I dew believe he's in for't," but I didn't say so out loud.

When we got into our state-room he took the lower shelf for his'n.

"I shan't have so far to fall, if I git oneasy and roll out," says he.

I looked at the top shelf ruther dubious—I ain't much of a clim'er you know, but as it turned out it didn't make no difference, seein' I didn't get a wink o' sleep that night. Hannibal grew wuss'n wuss, 'till he was about the sickest creatur' I ever see. He e't up all the lemons and codfish that mother had pervided, but they didn't dew him the leastest mite o' good; nothin' seemed to help him. And oh, what a fuss he made!

"Kill me, kill me, Ruth Ann!" he would groan, "if you have one ioty of love for me; kill me quick and put me out o' torment!"

I knew he was in terrible misery, but I did think he might 'a bore it a little more becomin' a man and a soldier. Why! a sick baby would 'a behaved better'n what he did!

I begun ter lo'er my 'pinion o' his moril cotrage, in p'int o' fact, I begun ter doubt whetherer no he had much moril courage ter begin with.

"A pretty bridle toor this!" thinks I ter myself, and I made up my mind that Major Hannibal Hawkins had got ter be trained in some respecks, and by me; but I wouldn't tackle him 'till his stomach got settled, then I'd undertake ter larn him a few things evidently not laid down in his militerry tactix. But for the present I kep' still and bore with him patient, and tended him the best I knew how.

In the middle o' the night the wind riz high and strong. 'till at last it blew a a perfeck gale. The boat rocked and pitched fearful, and if the furnitoor hadn't 'a been nailed down strong, we should 'a been hit and killed permiscous.

Bimeby as the storm increased, Hannibal camed some and seemed ter collect tergether what few senses he had left, as

you might say. He made me get out the life persarvers and we put 'em on, and then set there waitin' our "dooms," as Hannibal said.

I didn't borry much trouble. I remembered how them wimmen that Mr. Stockton tells about managed ter get a good meal o' vittles and set the table for three, out in the middle o' the ocean, and I reckoned I had as much gumption as they had, any day, and so I told Hannibal, and charged him ter hang onto the lunch basket, whatever happened.

Towards mornin' the wind changed, and the captain said there wa'n't no more actual danger, bein' as the wind was blowin us right where we wanted to go, and we was most there. But some was so scairt and worked up, that they wouldn't believe but what we was goin' straight ter destruction anyway, and Hannibal was one of 'em. His sickness had pretty much left him now, but he felt dretful weak and narvous, and insisted on dewin' all sorts o' foolish things. He run of a notion that the boat would go to pieces eventuwallly, and we should have to float or swim ashore, if we got there at all, and he said he considered it his dooty ter take percautions and he cordinly took 'em.

He made me throw away the lunch basket (though I insisted on fillin' my pockets fust), then he ondid the satchel and we perceeded ter put on all the cloe's, fastenin' 'em to our bodies, any-way we could, till we looked like anermated rag bags, and nothin' else, then he took the empty satchel in one hand, and the punkin sifters in the other, and we started for the deck, there ter meet the final catastrofy. I ruther hoped we should be carried out ter sea, we sartinly didn't look fit ter 'pear mong's't folks on dry land!

We'd been so took up with our "percautions," that we hadn't minded where 'bouts we was, nor nothin', and jest as we stepped out on deck, the boat give a tremenjous kind o' lunge, and bein's Hannibal and me hadn't no base nor ballance tew us, all rolled up, and stuffed out as we was, we found ourselves knocked over sudden and simultaneous, as you might say. Hannibal thought the time for action had arrove. He ketcht up the punkin

sifters, quick's a wink, and flung 'em far's he could out ter sea, threw the empty carpet bag after em, and grabbed hold o' me, as if he meant I should follow soot; but I had got perpendic'lar by that time, and I braced myself against the cabin door firm as a rock, and says I.

"Hannibal Hawkins, that 'll dew! Throw your punkin-sifters and all the rest o' your airthly possessions inter the sea, like a gump and a fool, if you want, but spare your bride of a day! Would you go twice widdered inter New York City, and a murderer to boot?"

This seemed to bring him tew his senses some. He stared round and rubbed his head bewildered.

"Why! What was it? I thought we was goin' ter pieces! Where be we any way?"

"We're in New York City. We've arrove safe and sound," I answered camly, as I pulled him away to follow the rest o' the passengers out.

When we came in plain sight o' the folks, wearin our life persarvers and all decked out with our bridal trewso, as we was, every body stared and some laughed and hooted. I didn't blame 'em a mite, and I told Hannibal so, and insisted on settin' down right where we was and on-riggin' ourselves.

"Redickerlous! "says I," who ever heard of any body's wearin all the cloe's in his trewso ter once!"

When we was reduced down to our original bigness, there lay a great heap o' cloes, and how tew carry 'em was the question!

"Hannibal!" says I lookin' at him severe, "Hannibal! where is the bag?" (I knew too well where it was!)

He wrings his hands and groans.

"Oh what a fool, what a blarsted fool, I've been! And the punkin-sifters is gone tew!"

"Yes they be!" says I, "but I be-grudge the bag the wust. What's ter dew about a bag?" says I.

I don't know how we should 'a come out, if it hadn't been for a good natered musicianer—a tromboon man, he was—he stepped for'rard and offered to lend us the great green woolen bag that he carried his instrument in; said how he could spare it jest as well as not. Wa'n't it

friendly? We took it thankful enough, and when our things were all stuffed intew it, it made quite a good lookin green woolen bolster, but ruther a curis bag for a new married couple ter carry their bridle trewso in, that's a fact!

As we was walkin' away from the wharf luggin the great green bolster between us, Hannibal stopped all of a sudden, and squared round in his militerry way, and lookin' back over the water, pinted with his finger.

There, as plain as day, we see the punkin-sisters sailin' away in a sort of percession, out ter sea! They did sail nobly, and looked affectin', no mistake! The tears came inter Hannibal's eyes.

"Ruth Ann," he says tremelous, "I'd give a dollar bill ter know where 'bout they'll put in, and how they'll fare."

"Yes," says I, "I dew hope somebody 'll get 'em that will 'preciate 'em then they wont seem quite sech a dead loss, as it were."

"They'll be a dead loss to us, Ruth Ann," he answers, shakin' his head dismal, "and they was to help pay our boards ter the Fifth Avenue House, tew."

"Oh la! don't you fret about that," says I, "I'll resk but what we'll get along. We can hire a cheap room somewheres and board ourselves, if necessary. You haint no idea what a manager I be! Why, I can cook a good meal o' vittles out o' next ter nothin, if the kindlins is only dry," says I.

Upon this, he brightened up some, and when we took a hoss car and got fairly settled with the green bolster between us, we both began ter feel as if things might a 'been a good deal wuss after all. In

pint o' fact our luck had turned, for we hadn't been in that car more'n five minutes, before she stopped to take on some passengers. One of 'em, a master nice looking young feller, quick's his eyes lit on Hannibal, rushed for'ard and grabbed him by the hand awful corjal.

"Major Hawkins; by Jove!" says he. He did 'pear dretful glad ter see him, and when he was interduced to me, he 'peared gladder yet. It seemed he was a distant relation o' Hannibal's and he had visited to his house when his first wife was alive.

"So you're married agin and this is your new wife! bowin to me as if I'd been the queen, and smilin' till all his handsome white teeth showed, "Married, and on your bridle toor. I'll be bound!"

We told him how that was about it.

"Well, well! says he, now you shall come right along home with me, and see how we live in Bohemy! My wife and dorter will be delighted to see you. Bohemy?" says Hannibal, "we hadn't thought o' goin much further. Is Bohemy nigh about here?"

"Oh yes, we shall be there in no time," answers Mr. Landsdown. (That was the young man's name. You see Hannibal's mother was a Landsdown.)

When we found Bohemy was so nigh we was glad enough ter go, for we both thought 'o the board bills and the loss 'o the punkin-sisters, and this invite did seem like a reg'lar providence, didn't it?

In a few minutes we found ourselves standin' on Cousin Landsdown's door stun' and we was in Bohemy. But what we see and experienced there, I'll tell you another time.



Jean Paul.

FRANCES A. SHAW.

N Luther, Lessing and Goethe, Germany magnifies her three greatest intellects; in Schiller and Richter, she reverences her best-beloved. "Richter," says De Quincey, "is a Proteus, an Ariel, a Mercury, a phenomenon, who can be compared to nothing in heaven or on earth or in the waters under the earth." His countrymen have well named him *Jean Paul der Einzige*—"Jean Paul the Unique."

Unique in style as well as in thought, he passes at will from the gravest sentiment to the highest humor. He heaps metaphor upon metaphor, he involves simile within simile. He strays off into episodes entirely foreign to the subject whenever the whim seizes him. He is crochety and grotesque. He delights in far-fetched illustrations. His finest gems are often inclosed in tawdry settings. "He has as much gold as other writers have tin," says one of his admiring countrymen. He labors under an embarrassment of riches; he is a sort of literary parvenu—all too fond of displaying his mental treasures. The perusal of a work of Richter's has been compared to a progress through a picture gallery, where celestial Madonnas, St. Johns and St. Cecelias hang side by side with Dutch Inns, Sancho Panzas and Drinking Boors.

It must be confessed that he has a style, repellent to most readers, pleasing to none. He is so obscure even to Germans, that a countryman of his, once set about compiling a Richter Lexicon, and carried it through "*Levana*," his great work on education.

But study and patience are the keys that unlock this enchanted realm. Underlying this gorgeous, often florid word-painting, are vast stores of true poetry and deep philosophy. De Quincey pronounces Richter, in his power over the humorous and pathetic, the most consummate artist since Shakespeare. "He is deep, billowy and vast. The melody of his nature is wild and manifold, its voice is like the voice of cataracts, and the

sound of primeval forests. To feeble ears it is discord; but to ears that understand it, deep, majestic music."

The *Fichtelgebirge*, a vast table-land in Northern Bavaria, takes its name from the immense pine-forests that cover it. In the heart of this region, Johann Paul Friedrich Richter first saw the light. The vernal equinox of the year 1763 marked his advent to the earth. He was born with the spring.

He came from a race who, as is common in Germany, united the two offices of village pastor and school-teacher. His paternal grandfather had passed a useful, saintly life devoted to both these callings, at a salary never exceeding seventy-five dollars a year. The old man's mantle fell upon his son, who with the paternal office inherited that pious content in poverty which had so long adorned it. To this humble life there came a heavenly solace—music, which Jean Paul, also a musician, declares the most divine of arts.

Pastor Richter, a learned, kindly man, but a strict disciplinarian, taught his sons in a manner peculiar his own, thinking to strengthen their memory by requiring them to learn everything by rote. He one day placed a Latin dictionary in Paul's hands bidding him learn and recite it page by page. Disgusted with the boy's frequent mispronunciation of the word *lingua*, he at length took away the book. The good pastor's library contained only abstruse works, beyond the comprehension of youth, but his sons were so eager for reading that they devoured even these dry volumes of which they did not understand one word.

In Paul's thirteenth year, his family removed from the hamlet of Coditz to Schwarzenbach on the Saale, a better living, yet one offering but a slender income.

Here Paul and his brother Adam were placed in a good school, where both studied Latin in the right way, and where Paul began Greek and Hebrew. Here too, they had access to good libraries, a privilege which Paul improved by reading everything that came in his way, from

the most profound metaphysical speculations to the lightest romances. He now began to gather those stores of out-of-the-way knowledge with which he surprises us in his writings—to compile those extracts from various authors which were ere long to comprise his sole library of twelve manuscript volumes.

At the age of sixteen he was sent to the gymnasium of Hof, the home of his mother's parents, who were prosperous cloth-weavers. They received the young student into their household and defrayed his expenses. During his second year at Hof, his father died, but the grandparents still kept him at school. In his nineteenth year, he entered Leipzig University. His parents had destined him for the church, but his secret predilections were for literature.

The grandparents soon died, leaving Frau Richter, their favorite child, sole heir. But the other heirs contested the will in a tedious lawsuit, which ere long consumed the whole inheritance.

The widow could not now aid her son in his university course; she appealed to him for help. The youngest son was of too tender years to assist in supporting the family, and Adam, the second, finding no other employment open to him, had enlisted in the army, from which death gave him a speedy release.

Paul was obliged to leave the university, where, humble as he lived, he had contracted debts beyond his ability to pay. Compelled to flee from his creditors by night, the only refuge open to him was his mother's one-roomed dwelling at Hof—a poor abode in the rear of the parish church given the pastor's widow, rent free.

Hither came her eldest son beggared in purse, but richly dowered in intellect and courage. With the calm, high stoicism of self-respecting, self-reliant nature, he set about his life work, resolved it should be no fault of his if he failed to conquer in the desperate struggle with fortune he saw before him. "He was at hand's grip with actual want," says Carlyle, "but he shook off the little evils of poverty as a lion shakes the dew-drops from his mane."

"What is poverty?" he wrote at this time. "Who is the man that whines

under it? The pain is but as that of a maiden whose ears are pierced, that she may hang jewels in the wound. Whoever pities me, I'll tell him to his face he is a fool."

Years after, in the midst of worldly success, he wrote: "Welcome poverty if thou come not too late in life. Wealth bears heavier on talent than poverty. I would not for much money, have had much money in my youth."

The Widow Richter's one earthly ambition was to see her eldest son installed in the paternal office. This son, who had other dreams, scarce shared her grief at the frustration or indefinite postponement of so dear a hope.

He had already begun to write under his life-long signature, "Jean Paul." His first work, the "Greenland Lawsuits," a series of satirical papers, dates from his nineteenth year. After many fruitless attempts to dispose of the manuscript, he at length sold it for fifteen *louis d'or*, to a Berlin publisher—a rare piece of good fortune. The critics, all save one, ignored the book. "Selections from the Devil's Papers," was its grotesque title. The manuscript, after running the gauntlet of all the publishers, remained for seven years upon its author's hands. Still he toiled bravely on, drawing up plans for other books, and writing articles for the magazines and newspapers, overjoyed if one was now and then accepted.

Authorship was his main dependence, but he took pupils when he could obtain them. His small gains, dutifully shared with his mother, kept starvation from the poverty-stricken household. He himself, sometimes suffered from hunger. Writing of those days, he said: "The prisoner's allowance is bread and water. I often had only the latter."

To Frau Richter, a good, pious woman, as unlearned in books as in knowledge of the world, her eldest son was a riddle past finding out. She had allowed him to pursue his chosen path in the vague hope that from this eternal scribbling, food, clothing and other necessities of life, now so sadly wanting, might be evolved some day. She had shared these literary earnings in a dazed sort of way, and would have been content to go on after

the manner of Racine's wife, who lived on the proceeds of her husband's dramas, without even knowing what a drama was! Now that Jean Paul had published a book—that sure road to fortune—she was sorely puzzled at their continued lack of money. As the sixteen *louis* melted away, and no more came, she ceased to believe in her son's vocation, and worried him incessantly with sighs and tears and dismal auguries for the future.

It was not from his mother, the best of women and of German *hausfraus*, that Jean Paul had inherited the "poetic vision and faculty divine."

This, with his cheerful courage and unwavering hope, had come a priceless legacy from his father.

The aspiring youth was thrown back entirely on himself. At home he met nothing but discouragement; outside these four pent-up walls no recognition was vouchsafed him.

Ignorance of the world of books and men, had bred an overweening self-conceit in the Hof gentry. After the usual manner of bucolic aristocrats, they fancied themselves hoisted upon a pedestal, whence they could gaze down in scorn upon a less favored universe. These rural magnates treated our would-be author with disdain; he became the butt of their scoffs and ridicule. What business had he to leave the commonplace rut assigned him by birth and fortune, and attempt things too high even for his betters?

Burns was ostracised in the same way by the Dumfries gentlefolk, a race long since forgotten, while the man they scorned lives immortally enshrined in the homage of the world. Neglect in life, and apotheosis after death, is the too common fate of genius. "Homer still lives and will live for all time," says Beaumarchais; "but what has become of those high-and-mighty personages who despised Homer, who avoided him in the public thoroughfares—who never deigned to invite him to their table—who looked upon him as a poor, obscure man who was merely writing a book?"

In souls like young Richter's, egotism becomes sublime. He cared very little what this narrow Hof world thought or said of him. In the hour of his sorest

need, he was offered a place as family tutor, but he declined it, assured that authorship was his vocation, and declaring that he would take charge only of the children of his own brain. He felt that the divine art he had espoused would accept no divided love. So, unheeding the scoffs of a world that has in all ages derided its teachers and stoned its prophets, he wrote on in want and isolation, while his good mother kept up a by no means cheerful accompaniment upon her spinning-wheel. Well might the flax be moistened with her tears, since the proceeds of her spinning never exceeded four shillings a month!

In Jean Paul's twenty-sixth year, he found a publisher for his "Selections from the Devil's Papers." The book had sold but slowly, when five years later he sent forth another venture, freighted with much labor and sacrifice, but with few hopes. "The Invisible Lodge," was its title, and it met with a kindly though not brilliant reception.

"Hesperus," the result of eight more toilsome, self-denying years, soared at a single bound to the topmost heights of popular favor. The critics were unanimous in its praise, and Jean Paul all at once found himself famous. His name was upon every lip; his brave, tender and beautiful words had found an echo in every heart. Never again would the reading public receive him coldly. The doors of the most exclusive circles opened wide to receive him; the aristocracy of birth vied with that of culture in bidding him a hearty welcome. The lovely and intellectual Queen Louise entertained him as an honored guest in the royal palace of Berlin.

The simple, upright soul that had so nobly borne adversity was unspoiled by prosperity. Richter never fawned around the great, or looked with disdain upon the lowly. To him all humanity bore the impress of the divine.

Success had come to him as the reward of earnest endeavor; he accepted it gladly, but not exultantly. To quote his own words of another: "He now felt that he had struggled like an eagle through the storm-clouds. The black tempests were dissolving beneath his wings, while the starry heavens beamed brightly above his head."

The widow Richter, who had ceased hoping for prosperous days, could scarcely believe in their reality. Her hour of worldly happiness was brief. She had just laid aside her burden of toil, just begun to enjoy the new life of ease and plenty, when she was summoned from the earth.

This son had tenderly loved his mother; he had dreamed of no successful future unshared by her. Unmanned by the sudden loss of the being dearest on earth, he laid aside books and pen, and for weeks would allow no mention of his bereavement. Her memory remained with him, a holy presence. He declares that man unhappy to whom his own mother has not made all mothers venerable.

The two sons left Hof soon after their mother's death, the younger, who would speedily follow her, to enter Leipzig University, the elder to seek change and recreation in travel. Wherever Jean Paul went, his fame had preceded him, and a hearty welcome awaited him.

The year 1798 found him in Berlin, where he formed the acquaintance of Professor Mayer, a member of the faculty of the university, and also Privy Counsellor to the King. A man of advanced ideas in regard to the higher education of women, he had given his two daughters opportunities for thorough intellectual culture enjoyed by few young ladies of that day. Caroline, the eldest, a charming and gifted girl, became Richter's wife, and it was given this chosen pair to realize that ideal of happy marriage—

"Two souls with but a single thought,
Two hearts that beat as one."

Richter tells us that when he wooed and won his Caroline, he carried his entire worldly possessions under his hat. These possessions proved ample for the support of his family; being of a sort that could at any moment be coined into gold. Government ere long recognized the merit of their owner, and granted him a pension for life. He had no greed for money, and was never rich; but "Hesperus" had opened to him a career that was no longer hampered by poverty.

Jean Paul's personal appearance at this time is thus described. "He was tall, muscular and strongly built. His face was indicative of his mind. The broad, no-

ble brow bore the stamp of intellect, the large lustrous eyes were full of sensibility. The nose was regular, the mouth small and fine. The neck was full, giving an idea of power."

In that day of the subjugation of woman, Richter became her champion, advocating her broader mental culture and larger personal independence. The sorrows, burdens and disabilities of average German womanhood moved his heart and pen. Hence he won the love and reverence of his countrywomen, from the peasant to the Queen. In those days of slow and arduous travel, ladies would often journey hundreds of miles to see and converse with him.

Friendship was his frequent theme. "His writings would have created friendship, had it never before existed," says one of his admirers.

His own friendships were numerous, and embraced people of all stations and callings, but none among them was so deep and lasting as that for his university class-mate, Christian Otto. These two kept up a daily correspondence for fifteen years.

"Be my critic, my reviewer, my public," said this Damon to his Pythias, and the true friend ever after fulfilled all these duties. When Richter died, Otto declared that he could not live without him. He in fact lived only long enough to arrange the papers of this "dear other self," and edit a brief continuation of the "Autobiography."

Jean Paul's writings are a mirror of his soul. Never did literary artist live nearer to nature's heart. To him the universal mother revealed her secrets; he became her chosen interpreter. "The whole temple of nature is the temple of love, and pulpits and altars stand everywhere," wrote this priest at her inner shrine, where he knelt a most reverent, impassioned worshiper.

"The poet, like Apollo, his father, is forever a youth," writes Jean Paul, and, even in advanced years, he retained that youthfulness of thought and feeling so characteristic of truly artistic natures. Childlike himself, he delighted in the society of little children. "Good God, from heaven, thou seest old children and young children, and thy Son long ago

declared in which thou hast most pleasure," he would often repeat with Goethe. "I love God and flowers and little children," is one of his sweetest sayings.

Flowers he called "Those living arabesques of God's throne, those mute, ever sleeping children of the Infinite." He was seldom seen walking the Baireuth streets without a flower in his button-hole; he died with flowers sent him by loving friends, clasped tightly in his hands. "The Infinite," he says, has sown his name in the heavens in burning stars, but on the earth he has sown it in tender flowers."

"The setting of a great hope is like the going down of the sun; the stars arise and the night is holy." Thus wrote Jean Paul in the flush of his own youth and hope. The words were to be verified in his own experience. The year 1821 brought to the revered author the one great sorrow of his life. His only and idolized son Max, a youth of great promise, died suddenly while yet a student at Heidelberg. In this night that had now fallen around him, the one star that illumined his darkness, the one theme that inspired his pen, was Immortality.

The shadows of another night were slowly enveloping him; he was growing blind from constant tears shed for his son. Conscious that he should not long survive the setting of this fondest hope of life, he ere long gave up the prosecution of new works, and set about revising those already written. Otto Spazier, his wife's nephew, began under his dictation, the revision of "Selina," a treatise on the immortality of the soul, designed as a sequel to the "Campaner Thal." The blindness ere long became total, and the author's voice so weak that dictation was impossible. Feeling that his life work was finished, he resolved to devote the remnant of days still left him to the offices of love and friendship.

The supreme hour drew near. "A look like that tradition gives to the bust of Plato, an expression like that the saints have told us of in the holy Christ, rested upon the features of the dying writer," says Otto Spazier. Every one who entered his chamber spoke softly, as if in presence of a being not of earth. Sight, hearing, and all the other senses had

gone, but he gave whispered responses to the accents of the loving wife as she held his hand, and breathed words of hope and comfort into his failing ear.

At noon of his last day on earth, the dying poet, to whom all hours were alike dark, thought that night had fallen and expressed a wish to sleep. All that lovely afternoon of late autumn he lay motionless with clasped hands and closed eyes, until, as the sun neared its setting, he fell asleep, never to waken again in this world. "Thus Richter passed from us, great and holy as a poet, greater and holier as a man, writes Otto Spazier. He died at his home in Baireuth, November 14th, 1825, in the fulness of his mental powers, and on the threshold of still greater literary achievement. Loving friends bore him to his final rest by torchlight, and followed by a sorrowing multitude. Upon his coffin lay the manuscript of his unfinished work on Immortality, and Klopstock's divine hymn, "Auferstehen wirst Du" (Thou shalt arise, my soul)—was his fitting requiem.

Next to Schiller, the *lieblich Dichter*,* Jean Paul,* holds the warmest place in the hearts of his countrymen. His works are numerous, and embrace a wide range of subjects. Their usual theme is "The Ideal *versus* the Real," the Godlike in man contending with the lower nature. Few writers have become so much the personal friend of their readers, few works are so permeated by that genuine human sympathy that makes the whole world kin.

Richter's best thoughts came to him in solitude. He could not write in the bustle of the town, and so he rented a small cottage in the suburbs. Hither he went every morning, a satchel of books slung over his shoulder, his dog Fritz gamboling at his side. Here his best works were written. Twelve months after, Wilhelm Müller, the well-known German poet, made a pilgrimage to this shrine. The owner of the cottage, a little motherly old woman, led him up a narrow staircase, and opening a low door, said tearfully yet proudly—

* *Dichter*, the German word for poet, is applied to all poetic writers, whether their medium be prose or verse. Richter wrote only in prose.

"This is the room where Jean Paul sat and wrote for twenty years. I tended him like a lord. If he had been my king I could not have loved him more. Ah, he was a man! He was not like a man of this world. I often told him so. Once I said to him, 'You seem to me like a comet full of light; we know not whence it comes or where it dwells.' At another time, it was his birthday, I wrote upon a large sheet of paper—

"On this day he saw the light, and was light."

Many poems and good wishes lay upon this table, but as he turned them over and came to mine, his face beamed with pleasure. It is about a year since he stayed away and did not come again."

Tears choked the old woman's utterance, and Müller left her with a silent pressure of the hand, feeling that among all the tributes to Richter, none were so touching as this, from the humblest of his friends.

Soon after his death, Richter's works were issued in an edition of sixty volumes. "*Titan*," the product of his best thought and effort for ten years, is considered his masterpiece. It was so esteemed by Richter himself, and a well-known critic has placed it first among the six greatest novels produced within the last century. A French reviewer pronounces it, "A poem, a romance, a psychological resumé, a satire, an elegy, a drama, a phantasy, having for its motive the enigma of civilization in the eighteenth century."

Richter's most popular work is "*Hesperus*." The late Rev. Charles T. Brooks, the translator of this work, and also of "*Titan*," may be said to have transplanted these two rare growths from their native earth, without any loss of their sweetness and beauty. Such praise can seldom be given to a translator. "*Quintus Fixlein*" rendered by Thomas Carlyle, who was the first to introduce Jean Paul to English readers, is an idyl of country life, sweet, quaint and pure, as the "*Vicar of Wakefield*." The *Flegeljahre*, a portion of which has appeared in our language, is the most pleasing of Richter's works, and may be regarded as a sort of continuation of the autobiography which he did not live to finish.

De Quincey pronounces Richter's "*Introduction to Æsthetics*" the wittiest book ever written. No English rendering of it has appeared; its involved style renders it a sealed book even to the masses of German readers. "*The Campener Thal*," "*Levana*" and "*Fruit and Flower Pieces*," are other translations of Jean Paul now before our public. E. Förster and Christian Otto are his German biographers, their joint work comprising fifteen volumes. Carlyle, and also Mrs. Lee, of Boston, have written memoirs of him in English.

In all literature there is no subtler, more tender, humorist. George Eliot, while admitting the frequent tiresomeness of Richter's style, pronounces him the most humorous of German writers. The peer of Juvenal as a satirist, he hurls the shafts of his ridicule only at reprehensible persons and objects; he never jests at high or sacred things.

Never was writer more fully imbued with the spirit of those "twin sisters," Piety and Poetry. To quote his own words:—"The beauty and holiness of life, the splendor of the Creator, the dignity and greatness of man's heart, and bright images of eternal truth, stood clear before his mental vision as he wrote. The sentimentality which so often mars his work, arises only from an excess of sensibility."

In many of his ideas Jean Paul is far in advance of his time. In "*Levana*," he advocates the higher education of woman and the universal diffusion of knowledge. He says that to apprehend danger from the education of the people, is like fearing that the thunderbolt may strike the house because it has windows; whereas it almost always enters through the smoke of the chimney. He declares that the highest subjects of intellectual speculation are good for the masses.

Jean Paul was a wonderful dreamer, and his "*Dreams*," though but fancies of waking hours, have the vividness of those actual visions that come in sleep. One of these, his best known and perhaps his grandest composition, is a dream of the universe without a God. He says in reference to it: "If ever my heart were to grow so wretched and so dead, that all feelings which announce the being of a

God were extinct there, I would terrify myself with this sketch of mine."

Another of his dreams vividly portrays the sorrows of a man, who like the mystic Wandering Jew, is condemned to endless life upon the earth.

Never had man a deeper horror of Atheism. "No one in Creation," he says, "is so alone as the denier of God. He moves with an orphaned heart that has lost its great Father, by the corpse of Nature."

Though bound to no church or creed, he was a devout, religious man. "In thy darkest hour," he writes, "remember Jesus Christ. Remember that soft moon of the infinite Sun given to enlighten the night of the world. Let both life and death be hallowed unto thee since He has shared them.

From many "winged words" of this most versatile and sympathetic of authors, we select a few gems, and then bid him a reluctant farewell, or rather an *Auf Wiedersehen*:

"The great artist when he stands face to face with his God, and from the mountain of the Eternal Law receives his art, must forget his lower life with its joys and sorrows. While he mounts to Heaven, the Earth with its petty realms, must sink beneath him, until at length, lost in clouds and distance, it vanishes from his sight."

"Life is a beautiful night, in which as one star goes down, another rises."

"We carry and lock up a heaven of starry light within our own breasts."

"Every virtuous and wise being is in himself a proof of immortality."

"That tenderest, kindest angel of the last hour, whom we harshly call Death."

"The stars burn as altar-lights in the great temple of the night."

"Fate manages poets as men do singing birds. We shroud the cage of the singer and make it dark, until at length he has caught the tunes, and can sing them rightly."

"No joy in nature is so sublimely affecting as that of a mother over the good fortune of a child."

"Man climbs a mountain as the child climbs a chair, in order to stand nearer the infinite mother, and reach her with his puny embrace."

"We shake back the snows of time from the winter green of memory, and behold the fair years of our childhood striding on before us in the distance."

"Ah, we have all known it once, we have all been once illumined by the morning-glow of life! Why do we not regard all first strivings of emotion as holy, as firstlings for the altar of God? There is nothing purer, nothing warmer than our first friendship, our first love, our first striving after truth, our first feeling for Nature. Like Adam, we are made mortals out of immortals; like the Egyptians, we are governed earlier by gods than by men. Our ideal outruns the reality."

In a life of but narrow experiences, Jean Paul's ideal also often outrun the reality. "Heaven, earth and sea stand before me like three divinities," he wrote. He never beheld the sea save in fancy. He died without having visited those two goals of his life-time love and longing—Switzerland and the oceans.



A Wheel of Fortune.

BY OLIVIA LOVELL WILSON.

Author of "A Legal Fetter," "A Social Dagger," "Luck of Ashmead," etc., etc.

"Smile, and we smile, the lords of many lands;
Frown, and we smile, the lords of our own hands,
For man is man and master of his fate."

—TENNYSON.

III.

FOR a long time afterward, Sylvia never could remember distinctly what occurred in that brief scene of fright and woe, on the Fair-grounds. She saw Mrs. Myddleton's carriage drive up, and Mrs. Myddleton spring out; heard Robert's cry of despair, as he sprang from her side. Then she knew, she too stood on the ground, while Junior Bolton led the colt away, and a crowd gathered about the white form. Then the young man who had been first to the rescue, commanded them to stand back, Miss Serepta came to Mrs. Myddleton's side, and Robert knelt crying wildly for a physician, as he endeavored to revive the fainting girl. Young Dr. Drew came running across the grounds, and after a moment's consultation, Denmead lifted the stillsenseless form of the girl into the carriage. Miss Serepta and Mrs. Myddleton followed, and the carriage rolled away, leaving an excited crowd of questioners.

Then Sylvia felt a hand on her arm, and saw her old friend Perry Halsted at her side. He drew her hand under his arm, and led her away.

"Oh; but the horse," she cried vaguely.

"Junior will look after the horse."

"But Robert—"

"Bob has gone with the doctor. Miss Serepta said I must take you home."

She obeyed his touch, but hardly heard his voice. She was trembling violently. Perry talked incessantly, distressed at her pale face, and hoping to restore her more quickly by common places.

"Seems as if Serepty grew more full o' sense every day. If I hadn't had such a swarm o' cares, I might a married some nice woman years ago, like Serepty. She has such a lot of book-stuff, and is such a hand at similitudes," by which Mr. Hal-

sted intended to express Serepta's command of language, "but jinin ain't fur Perry, single blessedness, mortgages, and more likely the Town farm fur sich as he," and he sighed and looked at Sylvia. They were now out of the Fair-grounds, on the dusty highway. Mr. Halsted touched the arm from which hung the ragged sleeve.

"I'm right glad it w'ant *you*, Sylvie, as lay there on the ground so white and still. I couldn't spare my little Sylvie."

"Don't! oh, don't, Mr. Halsted," broke sharply from the girl, "she is dead, and I have helped to kill her."

"Tut, tut, we don't know yet, and accidents will happen. I ain't a denyin' Bob was kerless."

"Where are we going?" she interrupted pausing in the road.

"I'm goin' to take ye home, Sylvie, I hitched old Trot yander."

Sylvia put her hand to her head with a hard sob.

"Home! I have no home," she cried pitifully, "don't call it home where they grudge the bread I eat. No, no, Uncle Perry, take me to Greytower. I must know more. Oh! I will be so good, I will beg forgiveness, anything God pleases, if she may only live. Come let us go to Greytower."

He could not gainsay her, so turned old Trot's head toward Greytower, and Sylvia would fain have hurried his shambling gait.

Perry garrulously recounted what he had gathered as the result of the balloon accident. The aeronaut had fallen twenty feet and was seriously injured. Dr. Drew, Senior, was attending him. Sylvia hardly heard the old man.

He refused to go into the grounds at Greytower, but promised to wait for her, and alone Sylvia sped through the blooming garden, upon which the sun now cast long slanting rays.

The household was in much confusion, and Sylvia's entrance into the large hall, was hardly noticed by the one servant who was hastily crossing to the stairway. She hurried on, and Sylvia sank down on a large wooden bench under a window, listening nervously to every sound from the end of the hall. She had never been at Greytower before. Only anxiety would have brought her there now. In the face of Robert's love for his mother, Sylvia thought of her as cold and proud, and had a dread of her presence.

But one great fear swallowed up all else. She laid her head against the carved back of the seat, pressing her smooth temples, as if giving herself needless pain, stilled the dull aching of her heart.

Presently the door at the end of the hall opened, and Mrs. Myddleton came down the hall. She still wore her hat, and the sad face under the broad black brim, smote Sylvia like a blow.

A stern look settled about the mother's lips, as the library door opened, and Robert, with little Kate clinging to his hand, came toward her. They did not see Sylvia.

"Mother!" exclaimed Robert in a low tone of entreaty.

Mrs. Myddleton bent over little Kate. "Go, my child, at once, to my room, find Diadma there. She came up from the lodge. Do as mamma bids you."

"But Faith, mamma, dear Faith, is she—?"

"Kate, mother has spoken," then, as the child obeyed, "I cannot talk to you now, Robert. You must not ask it of me."

"Mother, dear mother, do not look at me thus. I know I have done wrong in concealing my love for her—but I am punished—oh! how severely you cannot understand. Mother, tell me, can she live?"

"We cannot tell. The doctors fear internal injuries. And should this fear prove groundless, Dr. Drew says there is a hopeless spinal injury."

A groan escaped Robert. He leaned against the wall, one arm thrown over his face.

"Maimed for life—and, I, I have done it—it is more than I can bear—oh! mother, mother, my poor love, my little Faith!"

At this moment while the mother stood watching her son, every hard tearless sob that shook his frame, sending the keenest anguish through her, Sylvia Wendell left her place, and stood before them.

She went up to Robert, and laid one hand on his arm.

"I must help you bear it, Rob, I share the blame alike. Mrs. Myddleton, if I had not begged your son to take me to the Fair, all this would have been spared. I am the culprit—but Robert loved her. Oh! Robert, Robert, what can I do, what can I do!"

In surprise Mrs. Myddleton heard her despairing appeal, and saw Robert grasp the slender hand, and throw his arm about her shoulders.

"Sylvia, dear old fellow, you would not desert me," he cried, in a stifled voice. "I forgot all about you? how did you come here, and have—you heard?"

"Yes—yes," with a gasp. "I came because I thought her—dead. I could not rest without knowing more. Mrs. Myddleton, do not be harsh with Rob. We did not know—we never meant—but, oh! how can you ever forgive us, when we cannot forgive ourselves. And Robert loved her!"

The mother winced at the reiteration of this cry of Sylvia's, fraught with so much sympathy. Then she drew Sylvia away from the close grasp, that was almost an embrace, Robert leaned upon this companion in woe as well as weal.

"I do not blame either of you, my poor children, she said gently, "if I was stern just now, it was because I dreaded to speak the words that must pronounce your own remorse. No reproach of mine can equal Dr. Drew's verdict."

"For you, Miss Wendell, there is no possible blame. Through youthful folly you have learned a terrible lesson. You had better go quietly home now. Robert you must take her thither."

"No, no, Mr. Halsted is waiting for me. Only tell me, is it true Miss Carstone is very poor? must work for her living?"

"It is true, but Faith will never work again."

Sylvia shivered, and drew nearer Robert.

"If she dies, said he hoarsely, "I cannot live."

"Robert, my son, my darling!"

Mrs. Myddleton followed him down the hall, but he closed the library door behind him and she stood white and trembling without.

Sylvia went to her, and throwing one arm around the trembling form, she called peremptorily;

"Robert! open the door at once."

At the tone of command, the door was opened and the grief-stricken youth seeing his mother's face full of love and pain, threw his arms about her, and drew her into the room, with a cry of—

"Mother, mother, forgive me, forgive me."

Sylvia shut the door softly and turned away. For her there was no mother's love or grief to call for atonement. The bitterness of that lonely moment, when she had bravely recalled her friend to his duty, was like a knife in her young heart.

Miss Serepta came down the hall her eyes red with weeping. She did not seem surprised to see Sylvia.

"The nurse has come," she said. "I can go now, Sylvia, will you go with me! where is Mrs. Myddleton?"

"She is with—Robert—there!" said Sylvia, pointing to the closed door. "Let us go at once," and she hurried Miss Serepta's steps.

The cool pleasant evening had set in as they jogged along behind Trot. Sylvia did not listen to Miss Serepta's detailed account of the examination, and the stupor in which Faith lay. She wanted to close her ears to the awful thought of a life helpless, forever dependent upon others. Had she listened she would have understood the relations between Faith Carstone and the man who had that day saved her from being torn and maimed by the wheel in the machine shed.

Serepta and Perry chatted volubly and let her mercifully alone. Arriving at the Maythorne gate, Perry said warily:

"It 'pears to me Sylvie, we hed better go right along with you, because Dame Maythorne may hev' mounted her high-hos', and she can't clean out the hull on us, and maybe she won't be so high-falutin', if Serepta tries some o' them similitudes on her."

"I apprehend that appropriate phraseology will be inadequate to stem the cur-

rent of a chronic choleric temperament," said Miss Serepta smiling. "But Sylvia shall have the opitulation of my presence."

"You put it so snug, Miss Serepty. Now would you mind sayin' it agen? Tour upit-u-what?"

But just here they reached the house. Peter, the dog, had not left Sylvia a moment, save when she entered the hall at Greytower. Peter knew his place was not there, and had lingered with Perry and Trot. Now Peter instinctively slunk behind the trio, as they entered the white kitchen, and encountered the wrathful eye of Mrs. Maythorne. In every line of his drooping head and tail, Peter betrayed what the others felt.

Mrs. Maythorne gave one contemptuous glance at Sylvia's companions, then she pointed to the door.

"Go wipe those dirty feet, and do not enter *my* kitchen, Sylvia Wendell, as if you owned it. You good-for-nothing shiftless girl! *This* is the way you reward us for the care and the home we give you. You miserable dependent—"

"Mrs. Maythorne," interposed Serepta, while Perry sidled toward the door, and tumbled over Peter in so doing, "Sylvia has undergone an ordeal to-day exceedingly prostrating to her nervous sensibilities—"

"Miss Serepta Ann, you do not *know* the viper of ingratitude in that girl's breast. She has ruined the best horse on the farm, and made herself and young Myddleton the town talk, and there she stands as brazen as—"

"Aunt Maythorne," cried Sylvia, who until now had stood rigid, before the storm of words, "if I've done wrong I am sorry for it, but if Robert Myddleton's name is coupled with mine, it is not in any disgrace, and you shall not insinuate it."

"Listen to the little fool! No disgrace to be running around after young men. No disgrace to be seen openly flirting, standing in the arms of a strange young man. Shame on you! on you, you bold —"

Sylvia took a step nearer and cried with firm teeth clenched:

"You lie when you speak thus!"

At the same moment Mrs. Maythorne's heavy hand sent the girl reeling back

against the wall, with a blow that left its deep color on the lovely cheek. Sylvia screamed, Perry Halsted caught her in his arms, and Peter, with a low ominous growl, landed suddenly at Mrs. Maythorne's feet, every bristle raised, and every fang showing.

"It ain't in the natur' of men—or dogs, to stand this, Mrs. Maythorne," cried Perry Halsted, breathing hard. "You may rake *me* fore and aft, but you shan't touch her agen, or I'll be bolted."

And having gone as far as his one oath, Perry continued to murmur it at intervals. But Sylvia recovered from the first effect of the blow, all the evil in her roused to its utmost, sprang to confront Mrs. Maythorne.

A very devil seemed to leap into her eyes, and Peter quivered with suspense as he crouched, waiting her word, when the door opened leading from the living-room, and Uriah Maythorne followed by a tall man of thirty or thirty-five entered.

"My dear," said Uriah with great suaveness, "let me present Mr. Bowman. My niece, Mr. Bowman, also my wife."

"Most happy, I am sure," responded Mr. Edward Bowman, politely. "I hope I do not intrude."

IV.

Had Walter Denmead beheld the passionate fury in Sylvia's face as she stood there, the marks of the blow still quivering on her cheek, he would have felt only disgust, mingled with regret for a lost ideal.

But for Edward Bowman the situation only presented a dramatic, amusing, spectacle, and his glance of admiration for Sylvia's beauty was so intense, that Sylvia turned pale and drooped her eyes. Uriah Maythorne approached her and said in a fawning tone:

"Sylvia, my child, go with Mr. Bowman to the living-room. He has great news for you. Angelina, my love, Mr. Bowman will remain and take supper with us. How de do, Serepty; and how air *you*, Perry?" he spoke excitedly; something had evidently moved him deeply. He had never intended the young lawyer should follow him to the kitchen, and thus be introduced into the bosom of his family. Especially as that bosom, he knew, was in a condition of volcanic agitation owing to Sylvia's conduct.

Serepta and Mr. Halsted returned his salutation but prepared at once to depart, and on the way home Mr. Halsted gave Serepta no little trouble in soothing his wrath in regard to Sylvia's treatment. He declared himself "bolted" so many times on their way to the village, that had not Serepta had a soul above punning, she would have suggested that "lock-jaw might set in. But she only did her best to soothe him with choice phrases.

Mr. Bowman conducted Sylvia to the living-room with grave courtesy. He was the cousin and junior law partner of Mr. Louis Marchant, and had been sent hither on the errand of announcement that had led Walter Denmead to Avon four days previous. He saw Sylvia's extreme embarrassment, and veiled the amusement in his merry, Irish eyes, and this ready courtesy stood him in good stead in the days to come.

"Sylvia recovered herself quickly, once out of the presence of her now sulky adversary, whom they left Uriah striving to mollify.

"Mr. Bowman, you have encountered a strange household. I do not know what you have come to tell me, but I know you are Mr. Marchant's brother and a lawyer. I hope it is about papa's affairs. Uncle Uriah says there was nothing left for me, but I am loath to believe this, I am sure papa told me I should not be poor."

"Miss Wendell, I am sorry to say I know nothing about this. Your uncle is unfortunately your guardian, and also executor of your father's will. Nor am I Mr. Marchant's brother, I am his cousin. We are in the same law office together. I come to-day to oblige him."

"What is it then?" she said wearily.

"Sit down, you looked fatigued. I was here at three o'clock to day, but you were at the Fair. I went thither in time to see the disaster occurring to the balloon. Sad, was it not?" He spoke lightly thinking to divert her.

Sylvia shuddered, and made no reply, yet was glad he had not heard of the second accident.

"I am sent here, Miss Wendell to tell you of a fortune that has fallen to you. You know your mother was an own cousin to Mr. Eldridge, owner of Rose Lynn?"

"Yes, but I never saw him. Is he com-

ing home? Will he be pleased to see me? I would work in his kitchen to escape this house, and its slavery and unhappiness," she spoke eagerly.

Mr. Bowman laid a hand over hers almost carressingly.

"My poor child," he said in a tone that sent the first tears of this sad day, to Sylvia's eyes. "Mr. Eldridge will never return. He and his wife were lost in that luckless *Maniste*, on Lake Superior, six months ago. You are his heir; can you follow me?"

"Yes, yes."

"Mrs. Eldridge has a nephew who will be also an heir, should you compromise the case, as Mr. Marchant hopes you will. It lies in such a way that you can claim it all, if you wish."

"And why shouldn't I?" she asked quickly. "If I am his natural heir, I should have this money. A man can work, is free to live his life as he will. I see no reason for dividing the estate."

Mr. Bowman smiled.

"I fancied this would be the position taken by one party or the other."

"What is this fortune? Is it really large?"

A new hope seemed to have sprung into the girl's eyes. While Bowman was thinking in what a quick masculine manner, her mind had grasped the intelligence; while he wondered at the keen calculation in her glance, and attributed it to the same qualities that made Uriah Maythorne a miser, Sylvia's feminine instinct was jumping to conclusions, building a mighty castle for herself.

But who can correctly read a woman's heart? Not the man who looks, with the first flush of admiration, into the mysterious windows of her soul.

"I understand Mr. Eldridge's fortune was very large."

"Would it buy Greytower?"

"Hardly," he returned smiling.

"Greytower, Miss Wendell, I think no money can buy. Like my cousin's estate, Elmwood, it has a priceless value through inheritance."

"I understand. I only meant was the fortune larger than that of Mr. Myddleton?"

"In a comparative light, I think as mistress of Rose Lynn you could buy out both my cousin and Mr. Myddleton,"

was the reply.

"And if I should *not* consent to a compromise?"

"It would go to the Court for arbitration, and you must both abide by the decision."

"Do you think the decision would be in my favor?"

"That is impossible to *more* than surmise, Miss Wendell. But as nearest of kin to Mr. Eldridge, you stand the better chance."

"Thank you, Mr. Bowman. Now who is the other heir?"

"A man named Denmead."

"Do you know anything about him?"

"He is a man, who is what they call *self-made*. Is a mechanic, having worked in the machine shops of the Harlem Railroad Company, and finally established himself in a responsible position. He also has a patent, with which he thinks to make a fortune. He is a queer fellow, full of socialistic ideas. My cousin knows him better than I do. I never fancied him."

Sylvia pictured the rival heir as she listened. An elderly man, resembling woodcuts of the Anarchists, wearing glasses, and with a stoop in his shoulders, and repulsive greasy hands. With the arrogance of youth, she decided at once he must be very distasteful.

"No," she said resolutely, "I will not share the inheritance. I want it all. I am poor; I am lonely; I will *buy* me friends. Will you tell Mr. Marchant my decision?"

"Miss Wendell must not undervalue herself. I am sure anyone must prize you as a friend."

"And I am learning to prize money and the freedom it begets."

"Mr. Marchant wished me to say that he desires that you will meet Mr. Denmead here, or at any place you may appoint, tomorrow at two o'clock."

"Is it necessary that we should meet?"

"I think it must be since Mr. Marchant desires it. I hope you will remember Miss Wendell, my sympathies are entirely with you?"

"Thank you, Mr. Bowman," she said giving him her hand with a quick smile, and completing the wreck of his heart, the prospect of her fortune had already

undermined. He departed full of an idea in which he figured to a highly financial advantage, not unmingled with pride and a modicum of love for the girl he might win.

It was eight years since Edward Bowman had been disappointed in winning the only woman he had ever sincerely loved. His cousin and law-partner, Louis Marchant, to whom Edward owed almost everything in life, had won from him the love of Katherine Hawthorne, and since then Edward Bowman had never committed himself, although his flirtations had been numerous. Now he was at an age when a pretty woman pleased him beyond measure; while a pretty woman with a fortune was irresistible.

Mr. Marchant, who was one of the most straightforward of men, did not relish Bowman's account of his interview with Miss Wendell, or the eulogies he poured forth over her charms.

"What a fool Ted is, over a pretty face," he broke forth to his wife that evening.

"Is he?" said his wife, rather absently.

"Yes. He is raving over the Wendell girl's beauty, and reports her firmly bent on asserting her sole claim to the estate. A pretty dairy-maid, I suspect. Have you ever seen her Kate?"

"Oh, yes. She *is* lovely. Fair as a lily and as graceful. She is the girl you admired so in church on Sunday that you forgot to find the hymn. Robert Myddleton has been with her a good deal this summer."

"Is *that* the girl? she is very respectable then."

"They tell me—or Rob says the Maythornes treat her abominably."

"So—so—I commence to see daylight. I do hope it will all result satisfactorily."

"Don't worry about Ted. It is only a fancy. He will get over it, or would you like to have me speak to him?"

"I much prefer you should *not*," returned her husband with rising color, as he met her mischievous glance. "Probably he will recover if Miss Wendell loses the fortune, as in the case of Alice Heathcote last year."

"Thru' fur you!" laughed his wife, dropping into the brogue, "Teddy's an Irishman like meself!"

"And there is your young Irishman, Louis the Second, howling for you in the nursery. You better go to him" * * *

Sylvia spoke no word to anyone that night after Bowman left. She put aside Mr. Maythorne's advances haughtily, nor noticed his sulking wife.

Once in her room, she knelt and prayed earnestly that this fortune should be hers. Surely no appeal to God, in the interests of Mammon, ever came from lips so little conscious of wrong. While Bowman talked, the mighty power of this money, to make the future all her heart desired, seemed to present itself like a divine instrument. Once given this money she would as a first step, settle a portion on poor Faith Carstone. No want or care should touch her crippled life. Perhaps—oh! how sweet it would be to have her come and live at Rose Lynn. To be able to every day atone for her own and Robert's folly.

Then there was Miss Serepta Ann Carson, worn out with school-life. She would give her a home at Rose Lynn—and dear old Uncle Perry! he should not be turned out of his home. "Trot" should still remain, in his rickety stall, and the chickens torment the neighborhood. She, Sylvia, would pay the mortgage. The money should lift all these burdens. And oh! most of all, Sylvia longed for the luxury of her former life. She had never known a day's want, or a harsh word until she came to the Maythorne farm. Now they were her daily portion, and although ashamed to tell it, she often went hungry, because the food was coarse, and meagrely portioned. With youthful hopefulness, then, she arranged the preliminaries, and before she slept, she saw herself installed at Rose Lynn, Faith her beloved charge, and Serepta her righthand counselor. In undressing, however, as the ragged sleeve fell from the white rounded arm, she suddenly remembered those brown eyes that had looked into hers, and felt once more the eager touch with which he examined her arm. The warm blood rushed to her forehead. "How good, how kind, and quick he was," she murmured. "I wonder who it was? and—I never even thanked him?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

A New Year Circular.

WILLIS STEELL.



HEN I came down to breakfast on New Year's day I found in my mail a printed circular that read as follows:

January 1, 1889.

SIR:—Owing to the measures taken against us by the police force

in accordance with a recent action of the Municipality of the city of New York, for the prevention of mendicity, I have the honor to submit for your approval, a new system which preserves my interests, while it simplifies your duty.

Driven from the comfortable seat near the old aqueduct, that an occupation of forty years duration had taught me to consider as inviolable; aspiring, moreover, to the repose that my long career of labor and probity merits, I take the liberty to call your attention to a plan comprehending this happy result and the continuation of your favors.

To-day, January 1, 1889, I retire from public life. I abandon my old stand to the first-comer willing to brave the police. I shall, henceforth, remain in dignified seclusion in my home, relying entirely upon the generosity of a *clientele* that, I trust, will not fail me. Of my benefactors I have made a careful list, and placed each one in his class, according to the amount of his daily donation. You are one of those, Sir, whose daily alms amounted to three cents; that is to ninety cents per month or ten dollars and eighty cents per year.

Each year, then, I will present at the end of December a receipted bill for the amount of your charity.

I beg you to consider the saving of time and trouble this plan secures to you. To stop and turn out your pockets for the customary threepennies; to make change if you have none, these, in winter's snow and summer's heat, are some of the annoyances of the old place that you will not regret to be spared. Accordingly your benevolence comes cheaper.

Hoping that you will give your assent to this reform of mendicity by affixing

your signature to this circular and returning it to me, I beg you to accept the sincere gratitude of your obscure friend and well wisher,

FERDINAND FRAZEE,
(Blind.)

Central Park West, No.—
(Formerly 8th ave.)

After reading this circular I asked myself if somebody had confounded the New Year's with April Fool's day. My unknown practical joker had gone to considerable trouble. The circular, as I have said, was in print, only the paragraph that gave the amount of my alms, and the class to which I belonged was written in ink. That puzzled me, and with the knowledge of my habits, set me to thinking. Finally I recollected a blind man to whom I had formed the habit of giving every morning regularly, the change left from a nickel after I had paid for my paper. For more than three years, in fact, ever since I had lived on Madison avenue, I had seen him sitting under the wall of the aqueduct on 42nd street, wrapped in a ragged old shawl with an old battered hat on his head, and a tin plate resting on his knee. The grateful and even benevolent aspect of this Bartimeus is what first caught my attention. Next I observed on his breast a placard with the single word, *Blind*, and nothing more, neither good nor puerile reasons, and that disposed me in his favor.

I had even grown accustomed to double my ordinary alms on Monday, in order to keep him from missing my absence on Sunday. It seemed that this detail had not escaped his sightless eyes, for no reduction for Sunday was made in the circular.

Ought I, now to reply to this letter in a facetious strain and then throw it into the fire? or ought I to make inquiries to discover if the address given were fictitious? My curiosity had been so highly excited that I chose to seek out the writer of this strange document, and in the afternoon of the day of its arrival I walked out to Central Park West.

In front of the house, which was the

one I was seeking, I stopped and read over again my New Year's circular. The absurdity of the joke of which I was the victim made me smile. It was impossible that my blind beggar lived in this handsome apartment-house, which, if not so magnificent as some of its neighbors, still wore a look of self-respect that could only come from a succession of wealthy inmates. Even the apartment on the fourth floor could not rent for less than two thousand a year.

I determined to play the jest out, and penetrated the hall, richly decorated with *lincresta*. A tall negro in livery came towards me.

"Mr. Frazee?" I asked.

"Fourth floor," he replied at once. "Take the elevator."

At the door I paused. "Is this gentleman blind?"

I put the question with so much hesitation that the negro looked surprised. He recovered and answered with a short and contemptuous nod, as if the idea that there could be in New York a Mr. Frazee who wasn't blind, passed the bounds of ridicule. In the elevator, my doubts returned with greater force. If it had not been for shame of the elevator boy, I would have turned back and left the house at once.

"Of course," thought I, "the joker who has got hold of me took the name of some respectable person. Fortunately, I brought the circular, and it must serve as an excuse for my intrusion. But if I'm not the first who, under this fallacious pretext, has violated this gentleman's privacy, I may count on a frigid reception."

Arrived at the fourth floor, I almost decided to go back with the elevator-boy. But he descended too rapidly. "Bah! I haven't come so far to retreat now." Saying this, I touched the electric button in front of me, and the door was opened by a servant.

"Mr. Frazee?"

"Yes, sir; walk in."

"Mr. Ferdinand Frazee?"

"Yes Sir; will you please walk in?"

The hall to which the servant admitted me was dimly lighted, and I could only make out that he was a boy in livery. When he asked for my card I handed him

the circular by way of letter of introduction. He took it and begged me to be seated, saying:

"Mr. Frazee is not feeling well this afternoon and has not seen anyone, but if you will wait, he will surely make an exception in your favor."

Wondering why, I obeyed in silence. As the servant pulled aside the portière to pass into the next room, I saw him in a good light and recognized the ragged youth who had acted as guide to the blind man of Forty-second street.

Left alone, I examined the ante chamber leisurely. On a stag's horn hung a tattered shawl and a battered hat. I had seen both before. A console surmounted by an oval mirror supported the placard "Blind" I had read so many times. Two terra-cotta busts, flanked this; one representing the master of the house in professional costume, and the other exhibited him in correct evening dress. The first had for legend: "It is better to excite pity than envy." The second: "It is better to excite envy than pity."

While I was pondering these contradictory proverbs, the servant returned.

"Mr. Frazee says: will you kindly walk in?"

I stepped inside a large room furnished expensively and in good enough taste, except for the pictures and statuary that were of a painful nature. A bust of Homer stood on the mantle; a celebrated and mediocre engraving of "Milton Dictating *Paradise Lost*," had the place of honor on the wall, and all the other examples of painters' and sculptors' art had for their subjects, the infirmity of blindness.

In the middle of the room, with one hand resting on an Empire chair, stood the blind man of Forty-second street. I recognized him with some difficulty. He was dressed in black frock coat and trousers of an irreproachable cut. His linen, of which he showed a goodly expanse, was fine and of dazzling whiteness. Over it flowed a patriarchal beard almost as white. A ribbon, heavy with medals, hung from his lapel.

With a respectful bow Bartimeus vaguely directed me to a chair, and without preamble, but first sitting down in the chair behind him, he said:

"Whatever hope I may have had for my enterprise—" here Mr. Frazee gave a gentle cough. "I had not dared to hope for the alacrity with which my worthy benefactors—among whom, Sir, I have the honor to count you, have shown in responding to my appeal. This mark of esteem is the most enviable recompense that could crown a well-spent life, and all the kindness I have received heretofore, can not be compared with it."

"Then I am not the first?" I stammered.

The blind man bowed complacently. "I have received since morning, twenty-six signatures," said he. "A result more gratifying than I expected. At this rate, before the week is ended, my list will be filled. The poets have truly declared that charity is all powerful. She cannot be dammed up; she bursts her bonds or finds another outlet. By punishing mendicancy as a crime, the City teaches people that to drop a penny into a tin bucket is not to efficaciously succor the poor; it teaches people that by sparing the beggar the mortification of sitting in the public view in all weathers, they double the value of their alms. Some egotistic souls have been attracted, doubtless, by that part of my circular which enumerates the advantages of time saved, etc., but I touched that chord only to draw the minority."

I interrupted him: "Your plan is the result then of the recent action of the municipality?"

"You have said it but I would lie if I affirmed that the Syndicate had never discussed the superseding of intermittent and precarious begging by a plan of fixed and private mendicity. Many times has this improvement been the subject of our deliberations. The city's action has only precipitated an oft-discussed plan."

"A syndicate?" I repeated, struck by the word. "May I ask to what syndicate you refer?"

"What but the Association of Notable Blindmen of New York? There are ten members. This number cannot be increased. When a vacancy is caused by death, we proceed immediately to elect a new member, after having carefully examined the claims of numerous candidates who beg our suffrages. We are very par-

ticular. For it would not do to admit a Bohemian to a society composed of ten men whose frugality, honesty, credit and long popularity have made them rich enough to live on their incomes. There, I have said it, but I must add that inactivity would kill us. I used to think of retiring. Some years ago I spoke to a protege about taking my place on 42d street. I soon renounced the idea. No doubt it is sweet to enjoy in peace the fruit of one's labor, but I repeat, idleness enfeebles us, and besides, you know, a stagnant fortune, one that neither augments nor decreases is not an unmixed blessing. We are forbidden to speculate by a wise rule of the Association. The hazards of change would compromise at once the comfort of our old age and the aim of our association."

"What is that aim?"

"The formation of a fund for mutual succor. We come to the aid of meritorious members of our profession, whom sickness, incapacity, a late start in life or whatever cause, except dissipation, condemn to bad results. We wish, also to provide for special emergencies, vacations or accidents."

"Accidents?"

"Certainly. A blind man sometimes recovers his sight. We think of everything. We even dream of creating schools for apprentices. None of us who have been in the business twenty years or more, can think without pain of dishonest or ill-trained beggars occupying our old stands. Ah! the art of beggary has progressed in twenty years! a novice finds that he has volumes to learn. And mendicity will climb yet higher. Pardon my enthusiasm, Sir, which you must grant is natural, but I foresee the day when our profession will have reached so fine a point that the passer-by can give alms without any exterior sign appearing to mark the recipient from himself. Only the bearing of the alms-taker will reveal him to the initiated. That bearing will render useless the gross means which many blindmen now take to attain their ends. But all this is in the future. The world is not yet ripe for these innovators. Nearest to them in his methods (pardon what appears like egotism) is myself. Have you not remarked that I presented myself

without parade, without an accordeon or a tray of pencils and note paper? A simple placard with one word, *Blind*—was all my device. What more is necessary to awaken sympathy? I will add that I have always taken scrupulous care of my person and that care has not been wasted. As you see, Sir, I am not blind by birth merely, but also by vocation."

The orator drew breath while waiting for me to feel the truth of this aphorism. Then he held out the medals which dangled from his lapel, saying they had been awarded him by the Association of which he was the most shining member. He turned his sightless eyes sharply on me a moment afterwards.

"All this time I've been talking," said he, "and have forgotten to ask the reason of your honored visit. Perhaps you desire to pay a year in advance?"

"It is indifferent to me," I murmured, taken by surprise.

The blind man touched an electric bell on the table beside him. The boy appeared.

"Stephen, bring me this gentleman's account."

While Stephen was turning over a ledger that he took from the desk, the old man continued:

"That young man, whom you recog-

nized and who recognized you in turn, has been a great help to me. Through him I procured your name and address. All last year I meditated this project I am just now putting in practice, and I caused Stephen to follow all the clients on whose constant generosity I had learned to depend."

"Here it is," said Stephen. "The gentleman owes \$10.80."

"Will owe, would be more exact," insinuated the blind man, smiling genially, and presenting me with the bill on a handsome salver in *repoussé*.

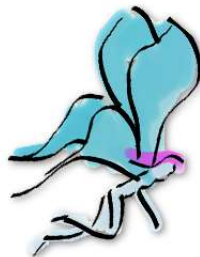
"Silver," said the owner, as if he saw me examining it. "A present from my colleagues of the Syndicate."

I read the inscription with which it was engraved:

TO FERDINAND FRAZEE,
The Friend of the Blind.

The mendicant, leaning on my arm, conducted me to the threshold, where he handed me the receipted bill with the words:

"I shall be pleased to see you here, sir, at any time, when I am sure you will gratefully acknowledge how ingenious is my plan. But if occupation should prevent your coming till then, permit me to say *au revoir* till New Year's Day, 1890."



A Midsummer Rose on Twelfth-Night.

BY MARIAN C. L. REEVES.

Author of "A Wave O' the Sea," etc., etc.

"I THINK you are very wrong, Rhoda!"

"Actually. Well!"

"Very, very wrong, Rhoda," the first voice went on, never pausing for the mocking answer that came out from among the midsummer roses clambering everywhere about the broad, sunny face of the old-fashioned farm-house.

"Very, very wrong, Rhoda. It may be too late to say it, but I do think you ought to wait until to-morrow, when your cousin Vance Goodwin—"

"My cousin!"

Vance Goodwin, who had been wandering leisurely through the labyrinthine shrubbery in quest of the house, stood still where he was, behind a dense rose-arbor.

"Eavesdroppers never hear any good of themselves," he thought. "It is some good, however, to hear I have a cousin, if she would acknowledge the relationship in a tone rather more friendly. The first kind little voice—"

That first voice was resuming the subject:

"Well, if he is not your cousin, Rhoda, he is at least the cousin of your poor, dear adopted mamma. And just because she put off, and put off, and died without making a will in your favor—"

"Stop, Nell!" There was a faint sob through the words. "Stop, dear. I won't have a word that seems a reproach to one who was so good to me. I wouldn't have her last hours disturbed by any thought of a will, and I won't have it spoken of now."

Vance Goodwin had shifted his position slightly, so that he could see the house: the girl in the light, summery traveling-dress, traveling-satchel in hand, who still lingered on the threshold, apparently reluctant to leave; the other girl on the porch-steps, among the roses—a tall, white rose of a girl, for all the heavy black draperies about her.

She was a revelation to Vance Goodwin. It was the first time he had ever heard his old maid cousin, Anna Vance, had any one at all belonging to her.

"Dear Rhoda, I'd not hurt you for the

world!" Nelly here broke in upon his thoughts. "Only, I do think you are wrong. If you would only wait until he comes—or just leave a note, or but a message for him! I suppose it *is* too late to say it—but, oh, dear, I do think you are wrong!"

Rhoda shrugged her shoulders under the long, black folds of her veil.

"Considering you've said it every day for the last week, Nell, perhaps it is rather late. What good it would do to stay and tell this interloping cousin of—hers—that he is a robber and murderer, because he comes lawfully to take away the only home I ever knew, and to break my heart."

She stopped short. She would not sob over the home; it was only the kind, adopted mother she had lost who should have her tears.

She reached up and gathered her last spray of those June roses, then turned and held out her hand with a brave smile to her companion.

"Come, Nell, we have just time left to walk comfortably to the station."

She dropped behind her friend an instant. Vance Goodwin, peering out more closely, saw her go down on her knees, and kiss the threshold which she never meant to cross again.

And then she was going down the path, arm-in-arm with Nell, and tucking into her belt the roses she had gathered.

Nelly looked askance at her.

"Do you know what day it is, Rhoda?"

"What day? The twen—"

"Midsummer's Day. And you know the spell of a rose gathered and worn by a maid on a midsummer's day?"

Rhoda smiled, though rather faintly; she knew her friend was trying to lighten the gloom of this home-parting.

"It brings down the wrath of the fairies, Nell, for broken bow and scattered bloom."

"I don't know about that; but if that same June rose is worn on Twelfth Night the maid's true love will come and gather it from her bosom, and the story will end in the good old way. 'So they were married, and lived happy ever after.' Oh,

Rhoda, and you will be with us next Christmas. We always keep the good, old-fashioned Christmas-tide till Twelfth Night, and what a pretty story it would be if this Cousin Vance Goodwin——"

They had reached the gate, but from his rose-screen Vance Goodwin could see Rhoda lay her hand on the top bar, and turn and face her friend.

Her eyes were flashing; she was no longer a white rose, but a very blush one.

"Well, you are the best friend I have left, and your mother is just too kind and good to take me home to teach the little ones. But if I have to meet this Vance Goodwin at your house I shall just run away, and bide away——"

"Bide a wee, Rhoda, my dear, for you are running away now."

Rhoda had quickened her pace, and Nell after her, and they were both lost to view round the turn in the road.

But this Vance Goodwin still stood looking out on vacant space.

He was a little pale, but his eyes sparkled, as he roused himself.

"Miss Nell will be serviceable," he said; "it shall go hard, but I will get her to serve my turn. I shall find out her local habitation and her name." As for mine——"

* * * * *

"Mr. Wynne."

It was Twelfth Night; and Rhoda from her place at the piano glanced up and gave her lover a smile, instead of the white hand, that was so busy with the keys.

Her lover. If she did not admit the fact, no one else questioned it.

Certainly he had been devoted to the young governess at The Hollies ever since Nell Hollingsworth introduced him as a friend of hers, four or five months ago.

Rhoda was looking wonderfully pretty to-night, notwithstanding the simple black dress she wore. But Nell herself had pinned a bunch of roses on her breast, and perhaps they reflected something of the color coming and going in the bright face uplifted to welcome Mr. Wynne.

There was some in his face, too, as he said:

"Surely they don't mean to keep you here all the evening?"

"Oh, but I'm keeping myself. They are everything that is kind. But—but I've been a little homesick all day; it is some comfort to do something for others' enjoyment."

Her sweet eyes filled, as she turned them away. Then she turned them back to him, smiling.

"Go and take Nell out, Mr. Wynne, or the beautiful Miss Rivers. I'll play you *such* a waltz."

"Not I. I shall stay and turn your music for you. Only I shall expect some pay for my services."

"Some pay?"

"A ro-e from the bouquet you wear."

"Oh, you have none in your button-hole. But you will have to wait until I finish this piece; I can't break in upon the dancers."

"No; but you can kindly permit me to make my own selection. I always make it a rule to be prepaid."

She nodded at him, with a smile. "Your choice, then; but you must just take the first you touch."

How was it that the first one he touched was a withered, shriveled, old ghost of a dead rose, which, unknown to Rhoda, Nell had buried out of sight in the exact middle of the bunch?

He drew it out; and if just then the dancers were not broken in upon, it was because there was more music in their feet than there was in Rhoda's trembling fingers, as she glanced up at the withered thing in Wynne's hand.

Nell, waltzing past just then, threw him a merry glance over her shoulder into the music-room.

But he missed it; he was looking down so into Rhoda's startled eyes.

"A midsummer rose on Twelfth Night—Rhoda, do you know what that means?"

She tried to laugh it off, and not notice that, for the first time, he called her "Rhoda."

"That is some trick of Nell's," she said, as steadily as she could through her blushes; she must have stolen it out of the leaves of my Bible. It is from my dear old home, Mr. Wynne; I don't think I can give it away."

"No; but come to me with it, sweetheart."

The unlucky waltzers had a time of it for the next bar or two.

"Promise me, Rhoda, my own sweet white rose——"

Down went the pretty hands on a false note.

"Earn it, then," she said, "and turn the page. Yes, yes, I must turn over a new leaf; it will never do to play so shockingly. There, go away, and dance with Nell——"

"And tell her?"

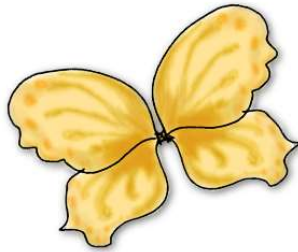
* * * * *

So there was a wedding long before the New Year grew old; and Nell was bridesmaid, as she had earned the right to be.

After all, Rhoda took it very quietly when Wynne ventured to break it to her, before the wedding day, that he was the hated Vance Goodwin.

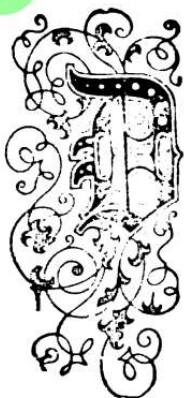
"And so Nell knew all the time. But if it had been your fate to fail, instead of *Wynne*——"

"If it were any good—— There, it was you began it first."



Under The Electric Light.

LINDA BELL COLSON.



"You know girls, I have decided to go into the Bellevue Hospital Training School and study to be a nurse."

"Why, Marjorie Bruce, what do you mean?" cried a chorus of sweet, girlish voices.

"Exactly what I have said. It is one of my New Year's resolutions, which I hope I shall be able to keep. Now, chère Madame, don't look so very grave over it, but do give me just a little more of that delicious coffee." And she smilingly passed her cup to her hostess, Madame de La Ville, a pretty, dark-eyed Frenchwoman, at whose house this party of young women were wont to meet one afternoon every week, ostensibly for the purpose of reading and chatting over their work, in Madame's native tongue, in order to "keep up their French," but generally ending as to day, in their all talking English. As Marjorie said, it was so sweet to hear Madame's English, that it was a pity to miss it.

Though the short winter's afternoon was already drawing to a close, the lamps had not yet been lighted, and they sipped their coffee, fragrant indeed, and served in the daintiest of china, by the open fire.

Marjorie sat full in its light, her soft brown hair, tinged with its ruddy glow.

On her knee lay her work, a half completed sock, and a great ball of stout, grey yarn, the stoutest and strongest to be had in the city, with which she was busy knitting socks for the poor, the outcome of another New Year's resolution.

"But Marjorie," put in May Downing, "think of the horrid things you would have to do, and you might take small pox or some other nasty disease and die."

"Oh that is what mother says; if you are all going to take part against me, I must leave. It is late anyway, so *bon soir chère Madame*. I am afraid we have not done much French to-day. It is to be hoped I shall be more of a success at my nursing than I am at it."

As Miss Bruce wended her way along the quiet streets which led her homeward, her thoughts assumed a somewhat sombre tinge in keeping with the fast gathering darkness.

To be a nurse, to devote herself to the poor and suffering was certainly a noble ambition; it would bring her peace, if not happiness, but at twenty-four one has still youth's unreasoning longing for happiness. Marriage she had decided was not for her. She cared nothing for the two or three men who sought her hand, and Jack had disappeared out of her life as completely as if the earth had opened to receive him.

It was cruel of Jack. They had been engaged for more than a year, and were all in all to each other. Nothing, she used to think, could ever separate two such lovers, and yet—

Ah, well, perhaps it was better so, though Jack had been everything she most admired in a man, tall, strong, fair to look upon, and moreover true and honorable, winning the respect of everyone. It was just a year ago to night, the 2d of January, that he went away. Just one year! it seemed like a life-time, and all on account of that detestable Captain Frere.

The Captain had been very attentive to her for a long time. He was handsome, decidedly fascinating, and undoubtedly as much in love with Miss Bruce, as it was possible for him to be with anyone. She had not meant to flirt with him, certainly not, but somehow at that New Year's ball of Madame de La Ville—and what charming balls Madame did give—she had danced a great number of times with him, far more than was right, she acknowledged now. But she was excited then, she had not realized how her conduct would affect her lover, and Captain Frere did dance divinely, far better than poor Jack, who assuredly was not a dancing man. It was a perfect ball, and she was enjoying herself to the utmost, when suddenly, as she paused for a moment's rest, Jack hurried up to her and whispered in a strange, hard voice:

"Good-bye, Marjorie. I hope you may be happy. I shan't trouble you any more—" and he was gone.

Good-bye? She did not quite understand what he meant, but at once the brightness, the joyousness faded out of the evening; the ball was a dismal failure, and Captain Frere the most detestable of men.

Next day she wrote Jack a loving little letter, pleading for forgiveness, and begging him to return to her, but the messenger brought back the information that Mr. Bartlett had gone out of town, leaving no address. The *Evening Post* announced that Mr. John Barrett, a young artist of unusual ability, had sailed for Europe, to be absent for an indefinite period of time. Once only since then had she heard of him, and that again through the medium of a newspaper, when his picture "Alone" was hung in the Paris Salon.

He was beginning to be a famous artist now, and had doubtless quite forgotten her. Oh well! probably she too would forget—when working hard in the hospital nursing the—

Her thoughts were rudely interrupted, and she was brought to a sudden standstill by something tightly twisted around her ankles—

It was a quiet retired street. The nearest electric light was evidently in a fitful mood and just then cast but a feeble glimmer around.

Was it some terrible trap laid for her? Her heart beat fast with terror. She strove to call aloud for help, but no sound came from her trembling lips. At the same moment in the darkness behind, she heard a musical masculine voice exclaim impatiently:

"What the deuce is round my legs!"

With quick feminine intuition Marjorie understood it all. Her ball of stout yarn had fallen from her bag, while she was absorbed in her thoughts—she and the owner of the musical voice were bound together in its many twistings—she strove impatiently to free herself, while from the other end she could hear a vigorous stamping mingled with muttered imprecations—but in vain.

The situation became more and more ludicrous, and at last, in a voice choking

with suppressed laughter, Marjorie called to her fellow sufferer:

"Would you kindly back up this way; it is my ball of yarn."

Slowly, solemnly, the two backed until close to each other.

"I must find the ball before I can disentangle us. Oh, I beg your pardon a thousand times."

"Pray don't mention it. Allow me," and the young man (for young she soon discovered him to be) was down on his knees in the snow, searching around for the recreant ball.

Marjorie stood helpless, overwhelmed with confusion, and an irresistible desire to laugh. The broad back, bending down, had somehow a familiar look, which made her feel that if the laughter escaped her, it would end in a helpless burst of tears. Was ever any girl placed in such a ridiculous position before?

"Ah, here it is at last," he said, rising; "I began to fear that I——"

The electric light blazed forth as if by magic, illuminating the scene for a moment.

"Jack!"

"Marjorie!"

"Oh, Jack, Jack," I am so glad to see you," laughing and sobbing all at once, and forgetting everything but that her two hands were seized in a strong, hearty clasp.

"And you are not married, Marjorie?"

"Do you think I would be here if I were?" making a faint effort to free herself.

"My darling, that blessed, blessed yarn; but for its aid I never would have known this. They told me six months ago you were married to Captain Frere. To day I was just here for a few hours on business, and hating the place for its memories of you, I was leaving it again by the midnight train. Oh, Marjorie, my love, I'll never let you go again. Dearest, won't you let this knot, which has been the means of drawing us together, be an earnest of that other knot to which there will be no undoing?"

Marjorie did not go into the hospital; but, in the course of time, she had as much nursing to do as she desired.

The Beautiful Home-Club.

BY EMMA J. GRAY.

VII.

"I THINK this is what might be called a small blizzard, girls," said Edith, as, having shaken the snow from her ulster, muff, and hat, she proceeded to the grate fire, in order to see as well as feel the heat.

"If this is a small blizzard, Edith, please deliver me from a big one. Why, when I reached here, my feet were numb, my hands stiff, and as for my nose and ears, they ached in such a terrific manner, I almost cried. Molly said, that she knew, in time I would be able to thaw, as she had limbered out considerably, and had really gotten to feel quite comfortable again. But I was silly enough to forget a veil, and the snow just cuts; besides, it is so blinding that I staggered all the way here. I think, Olive is to be congratulated, as she is the only one who has been able to afford the luxury of a pretty gown and slippered feet, and the indolence of toasting herself in this capacious, sleepy hollow, by a big, roaring wood fire."

At these words, all the girls laughed heartily, but Olive exclaimed: "Congratulated! No, I thank you. I would rather confront two blizzards, than be the unfortunate individual who must attack so mighty and magnificent a topic, as the conventional drawing-room."

"Do you like the cognomen of drawing room better than parlor, Olive?"

"Yes, though both are correct, as is also the word *salon*. They each convey a shade of difference, though virtually all mean the same. The English people more frequently use the appellation of drawing-room, while the French designate the same in saying *salon*."

"Don't you think we can almost discern the distinctive difference of the nationalities in these very words?"

"Yes, I do," replied Olive, "and as Amy seems once more happy, cosy and comfortable, and as time slips on so rapidly, perhaps I had better begin my talk."

"Besides," added Molly, "with Olive's exception, we each have that blizzard to go home in."

"I will commence at once, though I

scarcely know where to start, but suppose after the circumscribed manner of our previous talks, it would not be amiss to advise regarding the walls and ceilings, though I will say just here," with a knowing nod to each of the girls, "that a parlor needs nothing as much as a cheerful, charming hostess. No matter how elegant the appointments may be, they are nothing and nowhere alongside of the sunny smile, the tight hand clasp, the helpful words that woman can extend to even a stranger friend."

"It isn't the thing you do, dear,
It's the thing you leave undone,
Which gives you a bit of a heartache
At the setting of the sun."

"And I do believe in helping even a chance caller, and making him for a time, at least, forget the bitterness and sorrow that, whether it is acknowledged or not, is a part of many a life. Your friend may not remember whether your parlor was fitted up in hard woods, cabinet finish or not, but he will not forget the winsome, gentle woman whose words spoke help and hope, and will leave your home, always better and happier for having come."

"Oh, Olive, you are always so thoughtful and practical, so different from the rest of us," sighed Amy.

"No, indeed, I am not, but this thought came, and you'll all forgive me for appearing so wise, I know; and now for the ceiling and side walls. If you can afford it, frescoing will present the most handsome effect. In that case, the artist, after getting your idea, as to whether you desire a light or dark room, will relieve you from further trouble, provided you pay his bill."

"Does not fashion decide as to whether the parlor should be dark or light?" asked Molly.

"Certainly, but you must not be held by its cast-iron rule, or you will always be in trouble. Don't you agree with me, Edith?"

"I surely do, though in furnishing newly if you can, I think it's best to conform to the mode of the day."

"The artist, in frescoing, is not confined to the ceiling alone, but can decorate parts of the wall close to the ceiling, only allowing space enough to hang the pictures, and not cover up any of the costly work. But, girls, wall papers are so exquisitely pretty, that they are in great demand, and, when used, the side walls are generally covered with a thick paper of solid color, with an ornamental frieze. Both must harmonize with the papered ceiling, which may be as richly decorated as your taste and pocket-book will desire. Colored calcimine is sometimes used instead of either paper or frescoing, and it is very dainty. The color of walls and ceiling must always unite with the wood-work, and your furniture should be selected, with here and there a glint of the same shade also. It is not necessary to have a great outlay of money in order to produce artistic effect, as now so many cheap Japanese and Eastern materials can be obtained with small expenditure. It is good taste rather than money which is to be desired, though it is well to have both."

The parlor should contain your choicest and rarest purchases in the furnishing line, as well as souvenirs, because here your friends expect to see the best, and besides these articles of value are generally treated with more consideration in this room than they would be in any other part of the home. Introduce as much of art as is possible, for this gives tone and elevation to your parlor. Have the choicest bits of marbles, bronzes, and antiques, if you can, but if not, get the best copies possible. The Medician Venus, the bust of Clytie, the head of Daphne, or whatever you may please, that will lend charm and give pleasant thought and variety. Add to these paintings, engravings, etchings, photographs of some beautiful woodland scenes, marines, interiors, or whatever most may please. It is astonishing how cheap, even choice pictures, can be picked up sometimes, if you have not those deemed choice, give to this room what seems to you best. The old time parlor was something terrible in its cold stiffness. I implore you, girls, rack your ingenuity to make yours as cheerful, and sunny, and homelike, and luxurious as is possible.

And do not copy somebody else, but put yourself in your room. Plan out something new for yourselves, be ingenious, you can get ideas from any Decorative Art Society, but improve on them. Let *your* parlor show individuality. Have irregular juttings, and bay windows here and there, if you can, if not, break up the long, narrow, hall-like, or square parlor someway. Try what portières and screens will do to effect this."

"By the way," said Edith, I saw a very pretty screen, divide a long saloon parlor the other day. The frame was after the fashion of carved latticed work, and made of antique oak. It was in three divisions, two were hung with pale blue silk, and the other, was a Persian design on yellow silk. The silk was gathered at the top and allowed to remain loose. This is a little newer, and is not so stiff, as when fastened at the bottom as well. The screen formed a pretty decoration to the parlor, and as my friend said, 'Come look this side!' I went, and saw such a bewilderingly beautiful oriental room. I could not but exclaim, for it was only the other end, of the same long parlor, I had been sitting in after all. The same carpet, side walls, and ceiling went with both, but a Turkey and Persian rug, two three legged tables for tea, a mahogany rocking chair, a low artist's couch, with a mass of fancy silk pillows, to add to one's comfort, curious bits of carving and bric-a-brac, and two handsome, odd-looking lamps, had so completely changed the space on that side of the screen, as to make it seem a different room."

"What do you think of flowers, and plants for the drawing-room?" asked Amy.

"Growing plants are beautiful anywhere, and lend refinement to any room, therefore in the parlor they are ever in place. Put your palms, pendennis, or whatever the plant may be, in an ornamental pot, and place it on a pedestal in the window. There it will thrive and give constant delight. If you have a box of growing plants, treat it in the same manner. Put some vines, so as to twine around pictures, their graceful fresh effect will give beauty to the most severely furnished drawing room. While a vase of flowers put on your piano, mantel or

table, as at the time seems most appropriate, is indeed a great addition. They will last a long time, by cutting a little of the end of the stems daily before placing in fresh water. Oh, I love flowers, girls, they are so beautiful."

"You have not told us anything about furniture," interjected Edith.

"That is true," sighed Olive.

"Well, girls, for those of you who are to be rich, I would suggest what is known as the Empire style. The frames are of white and gold; the upholstery of tapestry of the time of Louis XVI. Or you may prefer gold frames, with plain satin cushions. These cost all the way from one hundred and fifty to four hundred dollars for a set of three pieces. Or how would you like those made of amaranthine wood, with cushions of rich modern tapestry, and introduce with these as many indolent and foreign looking divans and lounging chairs as would be possible? And if you please, for hangings, have great pictures, woven by the Gobelin and Banvais looms, to adorn your walls. Or another, and entirely different style, would be the delicate furnishing of Washington's time, with the graceful lines and spindle legs. You can buy carved frames, and have them upholstered in cushions and colors to suit. But for those of us who must have a pretty parlor without too much outlay of money, some cheerful cretonnes, with an occasional plush or mahogany chair, to break the monotony and add richness, must do. Be careful, when buying, to get easy, low, odd looking shapes for your chairs and couches, and see to it that your room has a full æsthetic look, without being all of a jumble."

"As to curtains, nothing looks as rich as a fine Brussels lace, gracefully looped, or hung straight, as you may desire, and have with these an India silk curtain corresponding in color to the interior decoration and furnishing; but with cretonne covered chairs, these would seem amiss, I would rather advise Nottingham lace, Madras curtaining, or both; the latter comes in dainty tints, and, caught back with pretty ribbon, will make a very at-

tractive looking window. If you prefer a heavier curtain, get a suitable shade of cotton cloth, with pieces of flannel running perpendicularly, after the Roman fashion. This is where you must unite taste and judgment, girls, and it is ever pleasant to remember that taste will do more than money towards attractive furnishing."

"That is true," exclaimed Amy. "Sometimes my teeth are just put on edge, with the flaring carpets and discordant colors I have seen in some homes, oftentimes in rich people's houses, too."

"I think that is where you more frequently find such a condition of affairs, than among the poorer classes, or those possessing moderate means," added Molly. "I suppose for the reason that poor people think more carefully before purchasing. The rich can try again, but those having little money, know their furnishing has come to stay."

"To continue our drawing-room talk, be prodigal of lamps, girls, some of them are cheap enough for the poorest of people, and a very little money will buy a dainty piece of silk for a shade, and they add so much to a room both day and night. Put plaques and sconces on your walls, also cabinets just as handsome as you can afford. The bric-à-brac to furnish them will probably be given to us as wedding gifts. Cabinets, as other furnishing, come in varieties. A beauty is made of mahogany, with backs of big mirrors, and topped by a large circular glass."

"Excuse me, Olive," chimed in Edith's voice, "but did you know that the snow was about three feet deep, we must start at once. Come girls, hurry, or we will never reach home. But I will make you all glad before going, by saying that I will take our next lesson, and will continue the topic of this morning, and will also advise regarding the reception room. May we meet at your house, Amy?"

"Certainly, I shall expect you all, and on time, too."



\$5,000 FOR A WIFE.

By the Author of "Wedded to Misery."

V

LLEWELLYN'S mind was in a most unhappy state when he left Tallyho. He believed that Antoinette's present graciousness was due to the change in his circumstances, and this conviction only served to separate him from her still farther.

"I would not have her heart if she offered it to me," he said passionately. "it can be bought and sold like a bit of merchandise. She is fickle and mercenary, and I am a fool to love her as I do."

He battled thus with himself all the way down town till he came in sight of Taunton's office. Then he threw his thoughts from him with an effort, and walked in with a manner that affected to be gay.

Taunton's office had the air of a place where a great crisis is impending. The clerks were silent and preoccupied, yet there was really very little business going on that morning. When he asked for Taunton, Mr. Eyre pointed silently into the private office, as one might point to the place where a corpse lay enshrouded.

"This is business," Llewellyn thought, as he crossed the hard-oiled floor in silence. "At the first breath of misfortune a man's relations change like the color of the chameleon."

Taunton was sitting at his desk.

"Come in," he said briefly. "Shut the door."

Llewellyn sat down uninvited.

"Well," said the broker, "you are in luck it appears. How in the devil did you manage it? Didn't you know everybody was selling Y. & C. at the time you bought? Or, did you have a pointer on the transaction?"

"I knew the road was going to change hands," said Llewellyn coolly.

"You did!" Taunton shouted. "Then why didn't you tell me? You knew I was short of Y. & C."

"You thought the stock was going down, didn't you?"

"Of course I did. Everybody did. It did fall to fourteen and three-quarters, and of course I wasn't ready for a rise."

"Why didn't you tell me you thought the stock was going down," said Llewellyn sharply, "and why did you foist ten thousand shares upon my shoulders when you thought, in your own heart, it would ruin me?"

Taunton winced.

"That was a mistake. Such things will happen, you know. But you have the best of it, I admit. I am left this time. How much do I owe you. Let me see."

"Fifty-four thousand, less commissions."

"A nice little nugget. See here, Llewellyn, while you're in luck, suppose you come in with me. I am all tied up, you know, and money is tight as wax. I want five thousand dollars to-day worse than the devil."

A peculiar smile came over Llewellyn's face. If his had been a mean spirit he might have gloried in the turn of fortune that had brought Geoffrey Taunton to such a point. There must be some truth in the rumor that the fellow had sunk every dollar he had in Y. & C. Nothing but desperation could have induced him to prefer such a request.

"I have five days yet, you know," he said, "and if I wasn't so tied up in one way and another, I might turn the stock and save myself."

Llewellyn got up and walked across the office. He was silent for a few minutes; then he said suddenly:

"I do not care to go in with you, Taunton, but I have a proposition to make."

"Well?"

"I will lend you five thousand dollars, if you like."

"On what terms?" asked Taunton, quickly.

"My terms are rather peculiar," said Llewellyn, coming over to the desk and resting one arm on it, while he watched Taunton's face attentively. "I will lend you the money on condition that you sign a written agreement to renounce all claim to the hand of Miss Eyre."

He uttered these last words slowly and distinctly, so that there was no mistaking them. Taunton looked up, startled and quite upset.

"I want you to agree to leave her alone, not to visit her or make any attempt to see her, or to win her affection. In a word, I want you to give her up entirely."

Taunton leaned back in his chair and broke into a disagreeable laugh.

"My attentions to Miss Eyre annoy you, then?" he said, maliciously.

"I do not propose to discuss the matter in detail," said Llewellyn, coldly. "I have made you a plain proposition."

"And for all this you offer to lend me five thousand," said Taunton with a sneer. "Confound your generosity, Llewellyn! If you want my privileges why don't you offer to *buy* them outright?"

"I will," said Llewellyn, reaching for a pen and drawing towards him a blank sheet of paper on which he began to write after the prescribed formula "for value received" the following lines:

"New York, December 12, 18—, in consideration of the sum of five thousand dollars paid me in full this day by Leigh Llewellyn, I agree to withdraw my suit for the hand of Miss Antoinette Eyre. From this day, I agree not to visit, write to or attempt to see her; not to make directly or indirectly any proposal of marriage to her, or to try any means whatever of attracting her attention or regard."

"Will you sign that?" asked Llewellyn, as he laid the agreement before Taunton.

Taunton laughed feebly as he glanced over it.

"This is a very remarkable paper, Llewellyn," he said.

"Unusual, perhaps, but quite legitimate," Llewellyn replied.

Taunton looked out of the window. He did not care a straw for Antoinette beyond the fact that she was a pretty girl, and that he hated to be foiled in any purpose. Whatever feeling he may have had

in the matter, was not a credit to him or an honor to her.

"Confound the fellow!" he muttered between his teeth. "I would stick it out, if ruin were not staring me in the face. But, if I were to go out on the street and borrow, it would knock my credit into a cocked hat. Pshaw! What is the agreement good for, anyhow? He would never in this world have it published. I can pocket the money—yes, by Jove! I must have it."

"You are a little hard on me, Llewellyn," he said aloud; "but I do not conceal the fact that I want money badly. Besides," he added, with a covert sneer, "I am not so madly in love as you are. I would look twice at five thousand dollars, I think, before I threw it away for any girl."

"You will sign, then," said Llewellyn eagerly.

"Put up the money."

"You shall have it by three o'clock."

"Make it two, if you can."

"Two, then."

It was before that time that Llewellyn was back in Taunton's office, the money changed hands and Llewellyn pocketed the agreement.

Taunton took the money with an inward chuckle.

"This is five thousand dollars for a wife," he said with affected pleasantry.

"I wish you joy, Llewellyn."

Llewellyn's face flushed.

"Miss Eyre is nothing to me," he said quickly. "I have no claim upon her—absolutely none. And I hope," he added, "that you will say nothing about this, Taunton. I should dislike very much to have Miss Eyre's name get out on the street. This is a private transaction between ourselves."

"Oh certainly!"

Llewellyn went away with a lighter heart than he had borne for some time.

"It may be that I am a fool," he thought. "She does not deserve any better fate than would be hers if she married Taunton; and yet—I cannot help it!—it makes me very happy to have saved her from that man—even though I am sure she will never be anything to me."

Taunton saw him go away, and laughed again.

"Poor fool!" he said. "He thinks he has got me now! And yet—" his face darkened, "I hated to seem to yield to him even for the moment. By Heavens!" he muttered in a lower tone. "I'll get my heel on his neck yet and crush his life out."

IX.

Mrs. Tremaine looked uncommonly well in black velvet, and cut rather a conspicuous figure in Mr. Blount's box at the opera. She was attended only by her maid, a luxury she had acquired very recently. Taunton was in the house, and came sauntering in at the end of the second act.

"Oh, I say," he observed with a glance at her superb bouquet and ostrich feather fan. "You are getting to be quite a swell nowadays, but—are you quite sure—ahem!—you are not piling on the agony a little too heavy—*just yet?*"

Mrs. Tremaine darted a quick glance at him.

"You think that housekeepers and bankrupts ought to stay away from the opera?" she said caustically.

Taunton winced.

"Housekeepers—yes! But not bankrupts. You should never let the world know when you are down. By the way," he added carelessly, "where are your diamonds? You used to wear a stunning bandeau and a bracelet that the Count de Guy gave you."

Mrs. Tremaine's thin red lips curled.

"I gave them to Monsieur the Pawnbroker when Mr.—Tremaine departed," she said in a low tone. "One must live somehow."

"Upon my soul, Nana!" he exclaimed, "that is too bad. But Blount will buy you some more—won't he?"

"They are hardly the thing for a housekeeper to wear," she replied.

"Oh yes! But you won't be a housekeeper always."

She made a little gesture half of doubt, half of dissent.

"By the way," she observed, "they say you have lost all your money."

"Do they?"

"And some one has attached Bonnybrae."

"It is a lie!" said Taunton, angrily.

"Hush! You forget yourself."

"Well—confound it, Nana! You would just like to see me down again."

Her eyes blazed up for a moment.

"I never pretended to be friendly with you," she said. "I have never forgotten Wolverhampton and the day you married me—or at least I thought you did. I was too fond and foolish then to think there were any ceremonies that were not real."

Taunton leaned back and looked uncomfortable.

"I thought we had agreed to let all that rest. When I brought you here and got you this place, you promised—"

"Promised!" she echoed scornfully. "And what did you not promise me? You forget that I was fool enough to love you. A woman never forgives such an injury."

"So it seems," said Taunton, drily. "But, for heaven's sake, Nana! Your maid is pricking up her ears. She can hear every word you are saying."

Mrs. Tremaine opened her fan with a snap that shattered one of the ivory sticks. Some reply rose to her lips, but there was a sudden blare of the brass instruments and her words were not audible.

"I think I'd better be going," Taunton said, presently. "You don't seem to be in an amiable mood."

"There is Miss Eyre across the way," Mrs. Tremaine rejoined. "You may find her more agreeable."

As Taunton left her box, her small white teeth were set firmly on her under lip, and her eyes were blazing.

"How I hate him at times!" she said to herself, and then again it all comes back to me like a feverish relapse. But I would not have him know it—not for worlds! I hate him more than I love him—yes! He shall never be happy if I can help it. I will spoil his life, as he spoiled mine. Heavens! What a crash this music is! I am sick of it. Jessie! I am going home. Come."

Mr. Blount's carriage was at the door. She drove out to Tally-ho and found the master of the house playing cribbage with Leigh Llewellyn in the library.

"Not home so early, Mrs. Tremaine!" said the old gentleman glancing at his watch. "Bless me! It is only ten o'clock, and, if I am not mistaken, you've got a new gown."

"I am afraid I am getting too old for the opera," she said with a yawn. "I like an easy chair and the fire much better."

"I'd like to hear anyone else say that!" said Mr. Blount, moving his peg precisely. "There—his nibs, Mr. L.!"

"Jessie was saying you were not so well," said Mrs. Tremaine, sweetly. "I thought it quite shabby to leave you alone. You see," she added, with a smile for Llewellyn, "I did not know he had such good company. Jessie! Here! Take my wraps. You may bring in the tea and—what will you have, Mr. Blount?"

"Hot Scotch!" said the old gentleman. "Llewellyn, you'll take a blue blaze with me, won't you?"

"I thought the doctor said—"interposed Mrs. Tremaine.

"The deuce take the doctor!" said Mr. Blount, quite red in the face. "I'll drink what I please."

"Certainly," was Mrs. Tremaine's suave rejoinder. "You are quite at liberty to kill yourself,—if you like."

The game of "crib" went on serenely, while the housekeeper sat toasting her opera boots on a plush ottoman before the fire. She was screening her face with her ostrich fan and watching Mr. Blount.

"If I am not very much mistaken," she mused, "he is going to have an attack. If he drinks that abominable stuff he calls 'hot Scotch,' he'll have one sure! Yes, Jessie, set it right down here."

A tray, bearing a spirit lamp and various appointments of a dainty character, along with a bottle of Scotch whiskey and some lemons, was set down on the table by Mrs. Tremaine.

"I will make it, madame," said Mr. Blount hastily. "The game is up, Llewellyn. There! Draw the cork, if you please."

"You will despise my teapot, I suppose," said Mrs. Tremaine, measuring out her portion of Souchong from a Chinese caddy.

"Tea, madam!" sniffed Mr. Blount. "I am not a teetotaler! Llewellyn here drinks it. I have seen him with a cup in his hands at somebody or other's afternoon-teaze."

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Mrs. Tremaine laughed as she dropped the sugar lumps into her cup.

"Mr. Blount spells it with a z," she said, and then she gave a little shriek of dismay, for Llewellyn was being coached in the diabolic business of tossing blazing Scotch whiskey back and forth from one glass to the other.

"Well done," said Mr. Blount, lifting a glass to his lips. "Ah! That tastes like old times. Llewellyn, here's to you and your next operation. I wish you luck on 'Change.'"

Llewellyn drank very little. He detested Scotch whiskey, but he did not offend his old friend by declining. Mr. Blount drank freely, growing garrulous and warm under the spell of "old John Barleycorn."

"Don't let him drink any more," said Mrs. Tremaine in an undertone.

"What's that, madame?" cried the old gentleman. "What's that—that—that—?"

A peculiar cry and a twitching of the eyelids, then his glass fell with a crash on the tiled hearth, and he slipped off his chair onto the floor.

Mrs. Tremaine cried out in dismay. There was a hurrying to and fro of servants. Llewellyn bathed his head with ice water, and the old man was finally carried off to his room.

Two hours later Mrs. Tremaine and Llewellyn were once more in the library.

"This is the worst attack he has ever had," she remarked.

Llewellyn shook his head.

"He is terribly prostrated, poor old gentleman," he observed. "He oughtn't to have taken anything."

"Oh, well. You can't do anything with him," said Mrs. Tremaine with a shrug, and then, with a sudden movement, she walked towards her own private secretary, which stood in an alcove.

"Mr. Llewellyn," she said, turning around sharply with one hand on the lock, "as you are a gentleman, I suppose you can keep a secret?"

"Trust me," he answered bowing.

"There is something I want to show you," she said, as she opened the drawer. "If anything should happen to Mr. Blount I should like you to know of the— the existence of this document. It is

Mr. Blount's wish, I believe, that it should be kept a secret. I do not know exactly why, but he has some avaricious relatives, I believe, who are rather building upon his wealth, and he wants them to have a surprise."

Llewellyn looked up expectantly as she untied a bundle of papers, and, withdrawing one, handed it to him. It was brief and to the point—a certificate of marriage between Richard Henry Blount, Esq. and Nana Meredith Tremaine, dated some months back.

"Upon my soul!" he cried, "You surprise me, Mrs. Tremaine—I mean Mrs. Blount."

"No, no," she exclaimed, glancing around in alarm, "do not call me that. We were married in June, but Mr. Blount would be very angry if he thought I had spoken of it. You know he is very peculiar; but I thought that if anything happened it would be necessary for me to make this marriage known and—"

"Certainly. In that case, you would; but I think it is rather a mistake to wait so long. If you will allow me to say a word to Mr. Blount—"

"No, indeed!" she said emphatically. "Not for world's! I hope I can trust you, Mr. Llewellyn."

"Certainly, Mrs. Tremaine," he said somewhat coldly, as he handed her back the certificate. "I lay claim to being a gentleman."

He bade her good-night then and left the house, not, however, without some wonderment at the meaning of this secret marriage.

"There is no fool like an old one," he said as he walked in town thinking of his aged friend's strange freak.

The streets were brightly lighted, and the opera-goers were just going home after their late suppers. Llewellyn passed a famous *restaurateur's* on his way home just as a party of three had crossed the pavement to enter a carriage.

"I am very glad you enjoyed it," he heard a familiar voice say, and then the perfume of violets drifted towards him with sweet subtlety.

"He turned and saw Geoffrey Taunton standing with his foot on the step of a coupé in which Mrs. Eyre and Antoniette were already seated.

X.

When Llewellyn left Mrs. Tremaine, she sat down again at her secretary and took out the paper she had just shown him.

"This marriage took place at Canajoharie," she said, tapping the paper with her delicate forefinger. "That is a long way off. If any one—but, of course not!" she added with a gesture which seemed to thrust from her a disagreeable fancy.

It was past midnight, and the fire was smoldering sleepily on the hearth.

"It is getting cold here!" Mrs. Tremaine observed with a slight shiver, and she rose with the intention of putting some wood on the fire. The servants had all been dismissed for the night, and she was quite alone.

"I wonder what makes me such a owl," she thought, and then, as she stooped for the willow basket, she started up again at the sound of a low half-singing whistle.

"What was that?" she exclaimed, and then a involuntary cry burst from her lips. There was a man's face pressed against the French window that led from the library out on the porch.

"Nana!" said a low voice in well-spoken Spanish. "Let me in, *carita*!"

Mrs. Tremaine stood as if fascinated till the man laid his hand upon the window-catch with a gesture of impatience.

"Be quick!" he said peremptorily. "It is cold."

She moved slowly toward the window, and opened it like one in a trance. A shabby foreign-looking man in a long cloak stepped into the room.

"Bah!" he exclaimed, shivering with cold. "What a cursed climate! Nana! Why do you look at me so? Are you not glad to see your long-lost brother?"

He looked at her with a grimace which ended in a mocking smile.

"Edouardo!" she murmured. "I thought you were—"

"In jail?" he added, flinging himself into a chair. "So I was, but you can't expect a man of my genius to rest contentedly behind iron bars forever."

"You escaped?"

"You behold me!" he said with a shrug. "I have had enough of Oporto. I am an American citizen. But—for heaven's sake! get me something to warm me up. Have you any American whiskey?"

"There are plenty of logs," she said, pointing to the basket. At the same time she pushed aside the portière that led into the dining room and brought from the buffet, a flagon of brandy.

The strange man drank a glass of it without a breath.

"Not so bad!" he said, handing her the empty glass. "Come and sit down, Nana. Let us talk awhile. You must have a great deal to tell me."

Mrs. Tremaine dropped the curtains at the windows and then sat down.

"You have not told me you were glad to see me," said the man who called himself her brother.

"I can't say I am," she said coldly.

He smiled, showing a set of sharp white teeth that somehow reminded one of a wolf.

"You were always the plague of my life," she continued. "What is it you want now?"

"Ah!" said the Spaniard, sighing. "What do I not want? But you are not a very loving sister, Nana."

"It is all nonsense!" she cried, impatiently. "Why do you call me your sister? When my father married your mother you were eight years old and I was just five. We are nothing to each other—nothing at all."

"You are not anxious to claim the relationship—*sta' bon!* I have something to tell you."

"Well?"

"It is about Tremaine. Your marriage certificate—"

"Was stolen!" said Mrs. Tremaine, quickly. "And when he declared that the ceremony was a false one, I was powerless to refute his statement."

"Exactly! But you had treated me like a dog, Nana—turned me out of house and home. So I determined to pay you back. It was I who took the certificate."

"You always were my evil genius," she said, shortly. "What motive had you in destroying it?"

"I did not destroy it," he answered. "I have it here with me, now."

He tapped his breast significantly, and Mrs. Tremaine sprang out of her chair.

"Give it to me!" she cried, clutching his coat. "Edouardo! It is nothing to you, now. Give it to me!"

"Not so fast!" he said folding his arms deliberately. "I have no intention of giving it to you. Bah! After all these years, what do you care for Tremaine now?"

"It is not that I care for him," she said, nervously, "but that certificate—do you know—has it any significance?"

The Spaniard shrugged his shoulders.

"Do you take me for a fool?" he said, with a short laugh. "The certificate is for sale. I have just been to see Tremaine. He was out, but I will go again. I will sell it to the highest bidder."

Mrs. Tremaine burst out laughing.

"Oh!" she said quite gaily. "Give it to him—by all means. I should ask nothing better than to have it destroyed—*now.*"

The Spaniard looked some what chagrined.

Tremaine has some money," he suggested.

"If he has not lost it all in stocks."

"If you had this certificate—"

"Oh, keep it, by all means," she replied with a counterfeit yawn.

The Spaniard was at loss to understand her.

"I will sell the paper for a thousand dollars," he hazarded.

Mrs. Tremaine looked into the fire. She had no money to give him. She could not possibly command a thousand dollars for such a purpose.

"Your terms are high," she said slowly.

"I am only a housekeeper here. Where should I get the money?"

"You always had money when you wanted it."

She was silent for a moment.

"I will see you again," she said, dismissing him with a gesture. "You ought not to stay here."

"Very well," he said, rising and walking to the table where he poured out a glass of brandy and drank it. "*Adios*, my sister! I am stopping in town. You shall hear from me again."

He left the room as he had entered it—by the window, which Mrs. Tremaine locked after him.

"It is almost two o'clock," she murmured, glancing at the time-piece on the mantel, as she turned out the light.

Softly she ascended the stairway and

glided along the corridor that led past Mr. Blount's room. His door was half ajar and, as she approached it, she stopped to listen. Everything was perfectly still. She pushed the door softly open and peered in. There was a light burning low alongside of Mr. Blount's bed, and she could see him lying there with his eyes closed.

"He must be all right now," said Mrs. Tremaine, and, to assure herself, she stepped inside.

There was not a stir in the room. The

low gaslight shed a weird illumination about the room.

"Mr. Blount!" she whispered. "How are you feeling?"

There was no reply. She reached out her hand and softly touched his fingers which were twisted in the counterpane. They were icy cold.

"Mr. Blount!" she exclaimed more sharply and turned up the light, which broke over a face that was already white and growing rigid.

He had been dead for two hours at least.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



Major and Mrs. Hannibal Hawkins.

No. 2.

AMONG THE BOHEMIANS.

BY BELLE C. GREENE.



HEN we 'rived at Cousin Landsdown's house in Bohemy, he opened the front door with his latch-key and begun stridin' up the stairs, two or three steps to a time, shoutin' at the top of his voice:

"Hullo', there, Kate! Hullo, Blossom! where are you? Hullo! hullo!" and Hannibal and me we follered along after, luggin' the green bolster bag between us. In a minute a door flew open and two wimmin sprung out at him, and the youngest one, his darter, I took her to be, grabbed him around the neck, huggin' him like all persess't, not mindin' anybody was with him. The other woman came for'rards more quiet like, smilin' and holdin' out both hands real corjul 'fore she even knew who we was.

"Hold on, hold on, little one!" says Cousin Landsdown to the girl, laughin' and extractin' himself away from her as quickly as he could. "Don't you see we've got company? Kate," (to his wife); "here's Major Hannibal Hawkins and his new wife from Punkinville, and they've come to the city on their bridal toor! I met 'em in the car and brought 'em straight home to you—knew you'd be glad to see 'em!" laughin' and rubbin' his hands.

"Here, Bloss," he says to the girl, "come and kiss your new cousins." And 'cordinly Bloss did kiss us, tacklin' Hannibal fust, and kissin' him as he never was kissed afore, I guess; flingin' her two arms round his neck, and half chokin' him and frouzlin' his hair all up; so it took him some little time ter revider and git smootbed down afterwards, I noticed. I didn't exactly 'prove of sech a great, growed up girl makin' so free with a strange man, if he was her cousin. Our Car'line wouldn't a' done so. Car'line would a' blushed and hung back kinder bashful, watin' ter be kissed fust. And they was 'bout of an age, I should judge, Car'line bein' jest sixteen.

Wall, they showed us into the parlor,

and I begun to take off my things, while they stood by waitin' on me and askin' questions. My land! that girl, Blossom, as they called her, could ask more questions in five minutes than our Car'line could in a week! And when she see the green bolster-bag she couldn't rest till she knew all about it; what was in it, where we got it and everything?

I told her our bridal trewso was in it, and then, as brief as possible, I give a sort of account o' the hull matter.

Oh, how she laughed and hollered and hild on tew her sides, as if she'd die!

"Oh, mar! Oh, par!" she screamed, "isn't it tew awful derlicious! Oh, dear! Oh, dear!"

Cousin Landsdown and his wife laughed tew, though they didn't make quite sech a fuss as she did, and they told her to go up in the garret charnber and fetch down the brown luther valise, and she done so, and they persented it tew us on the spot. We was pleased enough, not only because it was a harnsome and valewable present; but now we could send the trumboon man's bag back, which we 'cordinly did that very afternoon with our best respects, and an invite for him fer ter come up to Punkinville and see us next summer.

The girl, Blossom, seemed ter take a wonderful shine to me from the fust. She was a dretful lovin' little thing, and hung round me, huggin' and kissin' me half the time. I wa'n't used tew it, and didn't hardly know what ter meake on't.

"Oh, mar!" she would 'peal to her mother every once in a while, "aint she jest sweet. Ain't she derlicious (meanin' me, you know)."

Finally I said to her:

"Blossom," says I, "seems ter me you have a curi's use o' words here in Bohemy. Up home we ginerally apply the word 'derlicious' to somethin' good to eat, a pie or a puddin'—never to folks."

"But you look good enough to eat," she answers, laughin'; "you dew look jest tew sweet for anything."

There was mirrors hangin' all round the room everywhere, and when she said this, naterally I looked up intew one, kinder on the sly, ter see how I did look anyway, and she ketched me at it, and grabbed me round the waist and kissed me agin.

"There!" she says, "don't you see what a darlin' you be. You look like a dear, little strong-minded dove. Yes, you are jest derlicious. That's what you be!"

I laughed and kissed her back. There wa'n't no harm in her likin' my looks, and I wa'n't goin' to pertend ter be mad. But more ter see what she would say than anything else, I says:

"My face may be well enough, but my clo'es—I aint much fixed up 'side o' you and your mar," and I looked down at my gray alerpaccy disapprovin'.

"I don't care! Your'e lovely, clo'es and all," she answers. "And your husband, he is lovely tew! A great lovely giant! And oh, *sech* a name! *Major Hannibal Hawkins! Feebus!* as par says, *what a name!* But the best on't is, you shall be the lions at our dinner-party to night. You came jest in the very nick o' time!"

"Dinner party!" says I, "oh, I guess we can't go to no party; we didn't come prepared—"

"But you are *here*!" she says, laughin', "so there aint no go about it, You are *here*, don't you see!"

"What do you call it a dinner-party for if you have it in the night time?" says I. "I should think it would be more of a supper."

"Oh, we turn night into day, and day into night, here in Bohemy," she answered.

"Bohemy? Bohemy?" says I, "what a name! I never heard o' no *sech* place nigh New York city before. Is it a sub-bub, or what?"

"The name Bohemy don't apply to the place where we live, but to the serciety we go in," says she. "It's the name of a class o' folks, you know,"

"Oh! kind of a religious seck," says I. "There's lots o' new ones nowadays."

She laughed and shrugged up her shoulders. "Oh, dear me, no!" she says; but jest then her mar come in to call us to breakfast.

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"Breakfast," thinks I, "at ten o'clock in the forenoon!" But I was glad enough to go, for I begun ter feel kinder faint and hungry.

Wall, we went out to breakfast, and I must say, they was as kind and hospitable folks as I 'bout ever see; but they were curi's. As I say, they was kind, only they didn't treat us as if we was one of 'em, but more as if we was some sort of interestin' curiosities, Feejy Islanders, or circus monstrosities, you know.

I could see that they was studyin' and watchin' on us all the time, and enjoyin' themselves oncommon well a dewin' of it.

I don't think Hannibal minded; but it riled me. I didn't fancy bein' treated like a menagery.

Come night, me and Hannibal put on our best clo'es and went down to the parlors. When Blossom come in I didn't hardly know what ter think. I'd read 'bout "*decollity*" dresses and seen picles of 'em in the fashion books, but Blossom's dress was "*terrible decollity*!" It did beat all, and I hoped when her mar see it she'd make her go right up stairs and change it. But la! I found out her mar's was wuss yet, if possible!

As a woman, and step-mother to Car'line, I felt that I orter pertest and I did 'cordin'ly.

"Blossom," says I, "how can you go tew a party in that shape! Why! me and Car'line wouldn't think o' goin' round so, not even ter home on a hot day with all the blinds shet and the doors locked!" She seemed surprised. She looked down at her pretty bare shoulders and her white arms without the sign of a sleeve to kiver 'em.

"Everybody dresses so here, for evenin'. It is full dress, you know," she said, and I couldn't discover as she blushed or even winked at the thought on't.

"I should call it anything but *full* dress," says I. "Why! you ain't half dressed, not half!"

She bu'st out laughin'. "Oh! you funny, funny cousin!" she says, and ran away, to tell her mar what I'd said, I reckoned.

All the ladies at that party was dressed the same way. I didn't have a chance ter free my mind to Hannibal about it,

but I hoped he knew me well enough to understand that I wouldn't 'prove o' no sech fashions, in Bohemy or out o' Bohemy.

Pretty soon we went out ter dinner and set down to the table. Cousin Landsdown put me on his right hand, which I took ter be the proper place, though, naterally, I'd ruther a' set side o' Hannibal.

I was so 'shamed and embarressed at fust (on 'count o' the "*decollity*" dresses, you know), that I didn't feel like lookin' round much; but bimeby I began ter be so took up with what the folks was dewin' and sayin' that I forgot all about their clo'es. Funny, how quick we get used ter things, ain't it?

But it did beat all, the strange stories them Bohemidners had to tell 'bout one 'nother! Why! up in Punkinville you go to a party, and the wust you hear is how somebody (that ain't there, of course) is stingy, or extravagant, or desaitful, or homely, or tryin' to ketch a beau; but here in Bohemy, I declare, they actilly took my breath away! Sech terrible things as everybody seemed ter be a dewin' of! 'Cordin' ter their tell, 'bout all the married folks fit with one 'nother, or get divorced, or run away with somebody's else pardner; and the young folks was cuttin' up jest as bad. And here they was, laughin' and jokin' about it, as if it was all a matter of course.

But in jestice tew 'em I must say it wa'n't all gossip and scandal. No! Sech high-toned and intellectible subjects as they discoursed on, I never see! Sicolergy, Agnostycism, Boodism, and a lot more that I can't remember correck. They all appeared ter be edicated. Oh! terrible edicated, and I says to Cousin Landsdown:

"For the laud's sake, cousin, how do you Bohemianers happen ter know so much! I should jedge everyone of you had swallered a Webster's Unabridged and a full Encyclopedy ter boot!"

"Oh," he answers, laughin', "in Bohemy nobody is tolerated 'less he knows somethin'. Ignorance and stupidity is unpardonable sins, while even a talent for lyin' about our neighbors is appreciated, as you may have obsarved," and he turned to answer the woman that set on the other side of him.

"What did you think of my article on "Microscopy In Fiction?" she was askin'.

"Capital, capital!" he answers; "I fancy it must a' made old Rowells and his follerers squirm! Keen, keen as a razor, Mis' Van Allen!"

The woman laughed out loud, and they both laughed; then, happenin' to lean for'rard a little, she ketched me lookin' at her.

"Have you read it?" she asks, smilin'.

"No, I haint," says I. "What is it about? What does 'microscopy' mean?"

She looked at cousin Landsdown, and said somethin' in a furrin' tongue that sounded ter me like "*Arlerbungtown*" (oh, *le fin temps*!), and I naterally concluded she was askin' if I came from that place.

"No, I reside in Punkinville," says I.

Cousin Landsdown laughed.

"Mis' Van Allen," says he, "let me interduce my cousin, Mis' Hannibal Hawkins, from Punkinville."

"I hope ter see ye well," says I, and in reachin' acrost cousin's plate ter shake hands with her I knocked over one of my wine glasses and two o' his'n, and the contenks went into his plate mostly.

Mis' Van Allen give me the tip ends of her fingers.

"Charmed, I am sure, Mis' Hawkins," says she (which may be the correck way ter answer an interduction in Bohemy, but it wouldn't be considered very civil up our way).

"You were askin' what 'microscopy' meant," says she; "perhaps Mr. Landsdown will be kind enough ter tell you," and she looked at him with her great laughin' eyes, as if she was on the pint of enjoyin' somethin' amazing.

"Microscopy," says he, looking down at his plate full o' wine, kinder meditat-in', "means, literally, examination with the microscope, and 'microscopy in Fiction' is where an author takes his characters all ter pieces, mentally, morally and physically, and examines 'em with the microscope (of his mind, you know), scientific. For instance, in writin' of a woman, he tells how she looks and feels, acts and thinks; tells why she does this or that leastest thing, tracin' the motives and causes way back ter the fall o' man,

if necessary, and so goes on, in and out, back'ards and for'ards, till the reader's head swims."

"How queer," says I. "But what in nater do they dew it for? It can't be interestin', and it must be hard work—"

"The Lord only knows what they do it for, I don't," says he.

"Now, if I was goin' ter write a story," says I, "I should make it lively. I don't believe in meanderin' or microscopin' tew much. I guess I should tell how a woman loved a man and couldn't git him for some time, how she worked and contrived, and how, when she did manage to git him, they proved to be incompatible to one 'nother, and was both miserable; but how, finally, after a good deal of bickerin' and wranglin', a good many sighs and tears on her part, and some considerable perfane language on his'n, they learn ter git along ter-gether and lived middlin' comfortable ever after. Sech a story would be interestin' and instructive," says I.

Jest at this point we dropped the subject, for a young lady they called Saffo begun ter say some poetry she made up herself as she went along, and we all kep' still ter listen. I don't remember but just this one verse of it. Here it is:

When I am dead
No cruel word can wound,
No false friends injure or betray
The heart that is but dust.
Ah! Well a day!

Every verse begun with "When I am dead," and ended with "Ah! well a day!" and it was awful harrowin', no mistake.

I took it that she'd been disappointed and treated shameful by some good for nothin' man, and I felt real sorry for her. I reached under the table kiver and pressed her hand and drawed down my face sympathizin', but I had my labor for my pains. She only scowled and stared back at me as cold as a stone. If she had died the next day I wouldn't a gone to her funeral.

All this time I hadn't kep' track of Hannibal. I'd been so took up with one thing 'n 'nother, you know, and then he set way down on the other side o' the table from me. But now I looked at him ter see how Saffo's poetry 'fe'ted him,

and—my land! you might'a knocked me over with a feather. He was all settled down in a heap in his chair, and seemed ter be slip, slippin', as if he was goin' out of sight under the table eventewally.

"Boozy, if not intoxicated," thinks I ter myself, "and me, his wife, president o' the 'W. C. T. U. o' P.!' More'n that Hannibal himself was considered a strick temperance prohibitioner up home. But, you see, six liker glasses o' different sizes and shapes standin' all round his plate had been tew much for him. Some-thin' had got ter be done at once, but I reckoned I was equil tew the 'cosion.

I whispered tew a waiter and told him to carry Major Hawkins a cup of coffy, extry strong, immejitly, "*and no more wine*," says I, emphatic.

Wall, he carried the coffy, and Hannibal drunk it and begun ter straighten up and 'pear better right off.

And now I observed that the hull company was in pretty much the same fix, having had took more'n what was good for 'em. They was beginnin' ter be noisy. Ladies and all was laughin', tellin' stories, singin' songs, and every few minutes somebody'd perpose what they called a "*toast*." A "*toast*" was an excuse for takin' another glass o' wine or liker.

While I was watchin' Hannibal, still kinder anxious, all of a sudden a young man settin' beside on him that they called Fitz James, springs tew his feet and lifts his glass high above his head, his eyes flashin' and his harnsome face all of aflame.

"Drink, gentlemen," heshouts, "drink, drink once more to our guest's fair darter. Car'line is her name, and, 'cordin' tew her paternal relatives's modest ester-mate, she must be charmin'. Drink, then, gentlemen. Drink to Car'line!"

In a minute every glass was filled and raised, but almost simultanyous Hannibal riz tew, and stiddyin' himself with one hand on the table, he lifted the other in sollum protest, as it were.

"Gentlemen," says he, "I object!"

Upon that he straightened himself up gradewal to his full hight o' six feet two, and when he was all up and had got his bearins', he look-d round on 'em, carm and stiddy as a clock.

"My young friend here, Mister Fitz James, means well," he continues. "I am ter blame for the liberty he's took with my darter's name. You know, some men, when they'e drinked a drop too much, begin ter brag, and I guess mebbly I'm one of that kind. 'Tany rate, I bragged—bragged like a gump and a fool—about my darter's good looks and in-nercent, winnin' ways! Gentlemen,—some on ye must be payrents—"

Here he stopped and rubbed his head as he alwers does when he is a good deal disturbed, and the company havin' re-kivered from their momentary surprise, took advantage o' the pause ter pound the table and holler "Car'line! Car'line! Drink to Car'line!"

Hannibal waved his hand as if he was goin' ter speak agin, and they changed their tune.

"Hear! hear!" they shouted, laughin' as if they considered the hull thing an awful good joke. But Hannibal stood there firm as the rock o' Dundee and I see his jaw set.

"Yes!" you 'hear' all on ye!" he says between his teeth. "I say it shan't be done! I forbid it! What!" says he, "put my little girl 'long with the women you've toasted here in Bohemy to-night! Gen'lemen, it can't be—" all of a suddin he choked up and stopped agin. The thought o' Car'line seemed ter 'fect him powerful. "If you knew her, gen'lemen," he said, finally, his voice shakin', "If yere knew my little girl, you wouldn't think o' sech a thing—as it is, I, her payrent, must forbid it."

He looked round on 'em, and lifted one hand appealin'; then dropped it tew his side in helpless elerquence, and set down.

For a minute you could a' heard a pin drop, it was so still. Some looked sober and some looked mad, and Cousin Landsdown looked both. His face was red as a beet, but he smiled dretful sor-castic, as he turned to Hannibal, tryin' to speak careless and unconcerned. "All right, Major, jest as you say, of course. I am sure the gentlemen are satisfied," says he.

But I was sure they wa'n't, and I knew Hannibal and me must 'pear terrible disagreeable and onaccommodatin' to

Cousin Landsdown's folks and to the hull company. Not that I would a had Hannibal done a mite different! No, I was proud on him! But I hated ter have 'em feel hard toward us—and what ter dew that was the question.

I thought a minute, and then laid my hand on cousin's arm and looked at him as friendly and beseechin' as I knew how, and says I: "Cousin Landsdown, I feel as if we hadn't done our parts towards entertainin' the company ter night; what say to my repeatin' some poitry I made up 'bout Car'line, seein' they seem to be so interested in her?"

He brightened up in a minute.

"Good, good!" says he, and when he 'nounced ter 'em that Mis' Hawkins would recite a poim, they was all smilin' and good-natered in a minute. Them Bohemianers 'peared for all the world jest like children. All they wanted was ter be amused.

Wall, I began the poim (there was five verses), and went through from the first line to the last without a single mistake. Here is the poitry as I composed it, and as I said it off ter 'em in Bohemy that night.

OUR CAR'LINE.

She may be harnsome—our Car'line,
Of that I won't pertend to say;
I only know she's sweeter, brighter,
Than pinks and rosies, any day!

She neither short nor tall—our Car'line;
Her hair is yellower than gold;
A frozzly halo round her for'rid,
Like some sweet pictered saint of old!

And two sech eyes she has—our Car'line!
Beseechin', tender, sober, true—
Until she smiles, and then you wonder
Whether the rogue aint foolin' you!

Her voice so sweet and clear—our Car'-
line's;
Her motions graceful as a bird's—
Here's Car'line nigh as I can gither,
I only fail for lack o' words!

Sixteen year old—a child, our Car'line,
Let not the world that lays beyond,
E'en spile or mar, or make her suffer,
Our Car'line, that we love so fond!

When I got done they all praised me, and Cousin Landsdown took my hand in his'n and squeezed it, and says he:

"By my faith! fair cousin, you have true poitry in your soul! You would be an ornymment to our gild. I would we might keep you in Bohemy."

"I 'bleeged ter ye, I'm sure," says I, "but I guess I'm more fit for Punkinville than Bohemy." And I couldn't help blushin' ter think o' myself in one o' them ere decollity dresses!

"Not but what I like you all real well," I continered, "and I'm sure no folks could be better natered, nor better edicated, and I dew feel honored and 'bleeged ter ye," says I agin, bowin' fust to Cousin Landsdown and then right and left round the table.

"And now," says Hannibal at this

juncter, "if you'll excuse Mis' Hawkins and me, I guess we'll have to take our leaves. We didn't git much rest on the boat last night, and we feel pretty well tuckered out." (I seen Hannibal gapin' while I was sayin' the poitry.) When we riz up tergether, I made a kerchey and Hannibal made a bow, and lockin' arms we perceeded to go.

When we got along to where Blossom set at the table, she ketched hold o' my hand and whispers:

"Cousin, cousin! will you tell me all about Car'line in the mornin'?"

"Yes, child; yes, I will," says I, and I stooped down and kissed her, resolvin' in my own mind that I'd take her back to Punkinville with us when we went, and let Car'line larn her ter be happy in more nateral and innercent ways.



An Original Valentine.

BY L. A. H.

"DARE you to do it!"

The speaker was one of a group of young girls gathered round the button counter of a large retail establishment during the early morning hour before the rush of business began. Shop girls, every one of them, yet as bright and pretty in their careless youth as any circle of the fairest society belles. The floor manager, Mr. Fraser, had just passed them with a grave inclination of his dignified head, and a formal "Good morning, ladies," and the conversation had turned instantly in his direction.

"What a cross face that man has," said one of the girls. "Was he ever known to smile, I wonder?"

"Oh, I don't think he is really cross," replied one of her companions, a bright, piquant little girl, with large brown eyes overflowing with merriment. "He is a Scotchman, you know, and I fancy they are always a little stiff and awkward."

"Milly always stands up for everybody," was the reply; "but I never expected to hear her arguing in favor of the redoubtable Fraser."

And there was a general chorus of laughter at Milly's expense, who, nevertheless, did not seem at all disconcerted, but answered, gaily:

"I hate to be too hard on people, and everyone does seem to dislike Mr. Fraser so much; everyone but my cousin Jack, and he declares he's one of the nicest men he knows. He is quite intimate with him. But as for me, why, you know, girls, I don't think him any nicer than you do, though he is so polite. By the way," she added, "to-morrow is Valentine's Day. What do you suppose Mr. Fraser would think if anyone sent him a valentine? Oh, do you suppose that anyone ever did?"

Then it was that Ida Munson said, in her superior manner:

"I dare you to do it!"

Milly turned and looked at her. She and Ida were not the best of friends, although there had never been any real trouble between them; but somehow

Milly could not like Ida. She had tried her best to do so, being of a lovable disposition and a general favorite among her companions, but Ida would respond to none of her friendly overtures. Milly would not, perhaps, have noticed her remark now had not the other girls taken it up as a good joke.

"Oh, do, Milly," they cried. "What fun it will be to get a rise out of stately Fraser. Do send him one; oh, you must."

"I don't see any special fun in it," Milly answered rather gravely. "We should not know how he received it, even if I sent him one, and I don't think I shall. Why should I be the one to send it more than the rest of you?"

"Oh, because you always can manage those things best. None of us could do it half so well, and, of course, he'll never know who it comes from. Come, Milly, we'll all help select it; but you must direct it."

"No," said Milly, "I think it would be a silly thing to do. I cannot see any point in it at all, and I do not like to run the risk of offending Mr. Fraser. Jack says he is very shy and sensitive, and he might be annoyed, even if he did know who sent it."

"Why, Milly, I do believe you are afraid," said one of the girls teasingly, "and I never thought you could be afraid of anything, much less Fraser."

Here Ida Munson's sarcastic voice broke in:

"Haven't I just said that I *dared* you to send it?"

Now Milly had plenty of spunk in her composition; and with it a fair amount of temper, and this was quite too much for her.

"Oh," she said, turning and looking Ida fully in the face with her sparkling brown eyes, "of course I shall not be *dared*. I will send the valentine, girls, if it will give you any pleasure; but I think it is a very foolish proceeding."

Something in her tone made the girls feel that she was very much annoyed.

"Don't do it, Milly, of course, if you

really would rather not. We only thought it would be a good joke."

But Milly caught a glimpse of the half sneer on Ida Munson's face, and answered quickly:

"Yes, I have said that I would send it. We'll select it when we go out to lunch, Helen, and I'll post it to-night."

Then she turned quietly to her work.

Ida Munson moved away to the farther end of the counter, where her duty placed her. Her soul was full of venom towards little Milly Briggs. Why was it? Because Milly was so popular (which Miss Munson certainly was not), or because she dimly realized that Milly had divined her (Ida's) secret liking for Jack Briggs, Milly's handsome cousin? Whatever it was Miss Munson heartily disliked Miss Briggs with a dislike almost amounting to hatred, and had it in her mind to annoy her when she dared her to send the "valentine."

It so happened that the two girls boarded in the same house, and had frequent opportunities of observing each other. Thus Ida knew that, under all Milly's gay and sometimes careless manner, was hidden a very sensitive nature; and had also heard her say that she detested practical jokes. Ida chose to fancy that it was Milly's influence that prevented Jack Briggs from showing her attention (whereas the young man had not the slightest desire to show her any), and had resolved to punish her in some way if she could.

In suggesting the "valentine" plan her intention had been, if possible, to entrap Milly into sending it, and then, in some way, to allow the fact to become known to Mr. Fraser. In selecting him, she had thought only of some one who would be most annoyed by such a joke. Mr. Fraser, being manager of their department, and having his attention drawn to Miss Briggs in this foolishly unpleasant manner, might make her position disagreeable to her in some way, or, if not, she could trust to Milly's feelings being cruelly wounded when she knew herself to be found out, as Miss Munson fully intended she should know. But how to make it apparent that Milly was the sender of the "valentine" was the question. Mr. Fraser would not, of course, recognize her

handwriting, and Miss Munson could not see her way clearly to telling him the joke outright; therefore she was puzzled. But fortune favored her. The morning mail brought a package to Miss Briggs from the photographers. At first she left it unnoticed, lying at her elbow, as the rush of business kept her at her post; but at last she found an opportunity to open it.

"Look, Helen," she said to her friend, attracting Miss Munson's attention with the words. "Here are my photos. See if you think they are good."

Good they certainly were. The pictured face wore Milly's brightest expression, and Helen was loud in her praise.

"You will give me one, Milly, of course?"

"Oh, yes," replied Milly, carelessly. "I shan't know what to do with them all. I only had them taken to please mother, and she is the only person I know of who wants one, except yourself; so you are welcome to it."

"I don't believe your pictures would ever go begging," answered her friend, with a caressing touch on her shoulder, "if you would ever let anyone have a chance to ask for them. I know two or three people who wouldn't consider it a punishment to have one," she added, with a sly laugh.

Milly blushed slightly, as she replied: "I do not believe in giving away my photographs promiscuously."

"That means," said Helen, "you do not believe in bestowing them on men? Well, I think you are quite right."

"I know I am right," answered Milly. "That sort of thing only cheapens a girl. I do not know a man, except my cousin, to whom I would give my picture."

Ida Munson heard this conversation as she stood near, quite unnoticed by the other girls, and instantly her fertile brain conceived a neat little scheme. Could she but in some way secure one of those photographs, and change it for the "valentine" Milly was to send Mr. Fraser, her revenge would be complete. That was what she said to herself, as she moved softly away from the girls; but how to accomplish this. It would not be easy, as Milly might seal the "valentine" and mail it at once; but, again, she might

bring it back to the store to show the other girls, thereby giving Miss Munson an opportunity to put the picture in its place. She wished the envelope to be directed by Milly's own hand, otherwise it would have been a very simple thing to have possessed herself of one of the pictures, and sent it to Mr. Fraser. Miss Munson's sense of honor was anything but acute, but she had no wish to be discovered in her little game; therefore the picture must be sent by Milly herself.

When Helen and Milly went out to lunch, the latter left her package of photos lying under her cash book, very near Miss Munson's corner. As the two girls who were left at the counter were both occupied, Ida soon found an opportunity to withdraw one of the pictures and conceal it.

Thus far all had gone smoothly; but the difficult part was yet to come. How could she get it into the envelope destined for the valentine? But Miss Munson knew how to wait, and again fortune favored her. On her return from lunch, Milly brought with her the valentine—a dainty little perfumed trifle, altogether too pretty, the girls declared, as they gathered round her to look at it, Miss Munson among them. But Milly insisted that she would send nothing else. She would not violate good taste, even in fun. But she also said that she should enclose it in a yellow business envelope, so that he would think it a bill.

Having undertaken the piece of mischief, Milly entered into the spirit of it; for she had argued with herself that if it was foolish it was quite innocent amusement, and that Mr. Fraser could never discover the perpetrator of the joke, and was half ashamed of her former annoyance. Therefore, there was a good deal of fun on the addressing of the envelope, which Milly accomplished in a bold, dashing hand.

"It does not look like my writing, does it, girls?" she asked, anxiously.

"Not a bit, they all cried. None would ever guess it to be yours."

"Well, then," said Milly, "we have only to seal it;" but, as she spoke, several customers came to the counter, and Milly, ever attentive to her duty, sprang to attend to them, as did the others, leaving

the envelope unsealed. Now or never was Miss Munson's opportunity. She, also, had turned to her work, but was almost immediately released, and was careful not to attract attention when she hurried back to the desk where Milly had been writing. Drawing the photograph from its hiding-place, she glanced quickly around to be sure that none noticed her, and taking the valentine from its cover, she laid the photograph in its place, enclosing the whole in the yellow envelope and putting the valentine in her pocket. It was all done so quickly that it was quite impossible for any of her companions to have seen her, and her only fear now was, that Milly might chance to open the envelope again; but this did not happen. They were very busy all the afternoon, and Milly seized the only unoccupied moment she had to seal the envelope, without examining its contents. Could anything have happened more delightfully! Ida congratulated herself heartily upon her success.

The next morning the girls waited eagerly for the arrival of the postman. Of course it was highly improbable that he would happen to come in just as Mr. Fraser made his visit to their counter; but there was a chance, and, as they had hoped, he really did appear a moment after Mr. Fraser had paused at the counter next theirs. Among two or three letters which he received, the girls' sharp eyes discovered the yellow envelope. He was talking with one of the clerks when the letters were handed to him, and therefore held them unopened for several minutes; but greatly to the girls' delight he did not move away, and finally they saw him prepare to open them. He glanced at them carelessly until he came to the yellow envelope, which he studied closely for a second, as if puzzled by its appearance. Then he tore it open. The girls, of course, could not see its contents, only the expression of his face, which, much to their astonishment, he at once turned towards them, causing them all to drop their eyes and turn away—all, that is, except Miss Munson, who was interested to see what he would do next. She alone could understand his glance at them, or guess his amazement upon drawing out the photograph, and she delighted in-

wardly over the success of her scheme, as, with a searching look at poor Milly, who, however, did not notice it, he moved hastily away. No sooner were the girls aware that he had gone, than they drew together in dismay.

"Why, girls!" cried Milly, "did you see him look at us?"

"What did that mean?"

"How can he suspect *us* of sending it?"

"Oh! I don't know," answered Helen, excitedly. "I never was so surprised in my life! Who would have thought of his turning on us? But did you see his face? Wasn't it funny, such utter amazement?"

"Funny!" quoth Milly, in disgust; "it will not be funny if he has found us out."

"Oh! but, Milly, how could he?"

"Well," remarked Miss Munson, coolly, "it will be remarkable if he does not suspect us, when he caught us all watching him."

"That is true," said Milly. "What can we do, and what can he have seen about that wretched envelope to make him think of us? Girls!" she went on, in tragic tones, "what shall I do? He will never forgive such a silly joke."

"Oh, never mind," said Ida, soothingly. "He probably does not suspect you more than the rest of us, and, though why he should have thought of us at all passes my comprehension; still he will have to visit his anger on all of us."

Milly received Ida's consolation gratefully. She could not understand what made her so nice all at once, though she fancied it might be because Ida had dared her into sending the "valentine," which bade fair now to prove a source of trouble.

The girls all laughed it off, and declared Mr. Fraser to be a surly creature, if he could not take a little fun pleasantly; although, somehow, the fun had not been all they had anticipated. In the meantime, Mr. Fraser, quite lost in astonishment at the receipt of the photograph, was racking his brains to find some possible reason for its having been sent. At first he fancied there must be some mistake; but the address on the envelope was quite clear. "Mr. Philip S. Fraser" stood out in the large, bold handwriting, giving not the slightest possibility for an

error in the name. As he looked at it, he smiled involuntarily, thinking how absurdly the attempted masculine hand contrasted with the little woman, whom he supposed must be responsible for it. He scarcely knew Miss Briggs; not at all, in fact, beyond the recognition that business and politeness demanded. Although, as she happened to be the cousin of his only intimate friend, he had noticed her rather more than the other young ladies. But Phil. Fraser was not at all a ladies' man. He had never had anything to do with ladies, and knew absolutely nothing about them. An orphan, without any near relatives, he had lived for ten years a very solitary life, working steadily at his business until he had been promoted to his present position.

Milly had been quite correct in her judgment—he was a Scotchman, both shy and awkward, although the latter characteristics had grown upon him more from his manner of living, than because they were natural to him—and he was, also, as Jack Briggs enthusiastically declared, "a thorough-going good fellow!"

When he returned to his lodgings that night, and settled himself as usual for a solitary evening, it was with an odd sense of excitement that he drew the yellow envelope from his pocket, and proceeded to study the pictured face within its cover. It was a pretty face, there was no denying that (and if Fraser was a recluse, he was certainly no blind to beauty in any form). It had large, laughing, brown eyes, and a pair of ripe rosy lips that seemed to smile at him as he gazed.

"Well," he soliloquized, after a long, silent study of the picture, "I confess I don't understand it. Why on earth Miss Briggs should send me her picture, or why she should even think of me at all, I cannot conceive. I never exchanged a dozen words with her—" and Phil. felt a pleasant little thrill pass through him, as any man might who had been singled out as the object of such a pretty girl's attention. He would not have liked to confess how long he sat idle, gazing at Milly's sweet face, and thinking of nothing but the mystery of his having it to gaze at. At last, however, he arose, without being any nearer a solution than when he sat down, and proceeded in his usual

methodical style to note the receipt of the "photograph," with his other letters. In doing so, however, he happened to notice the date, The 14th of February, and a light flashed upon him—St. Valentine's day! Would not that account for the sending of the picture? It was a joke, of course; but somehow Phil. did not feel so pleased as he had before.

"It was a very silly joke, and he should not have supposed any girl capable of sending her own likeness to a stranger, even in fun. A very unlady-like thing to do, and especially for Miss Briggs, the cousin of his intimate friend."

All this while, the "photograph," safely hidden from view, lay on his desk in front of him. Thinking thus and waxing wroth as he thought, he mechanically drew it out to the light again, and almost instantly his feelings underwent a change. Under the influence of those bright eyes, which returned his gaze so frankly, he began to frame excuses for the pretty offender. She was evidently very young, and therefore thoughtless.

From the superiority of his twenty-five years, Phil. began to feel quite tenderly toward Milly's inexperienced youth. Doubtless there were many reasons why she had perpetrated the joke. It was probably a concoction of all the girls, and she had been over-persuaded (little thinking how nearly he touched the truth). In short, Phil. forgot his anger of a moment before, and instead of destroying the picture, as he had half intended doing, he slipped it inside the big book he was reading, where, it must be owned, it received far more attention than the book. After much cogitation he decided that he was not at all sorry to have the picture, and that his best plan was to ignore the matter entirely. What it could have been intended to elicit from him, he could not imagine; but to let things take their own course was certainly the best way.

He thought to himself that it was fortunate he had so few acquaintances, for there would be no danger of his talking the affair over with anyone.

"No," he said, "I will take care it never comes out from me. I should not enjoy hearing Miss Briggs discussed, and I am quite sure Jack would not. I know he is as fond of her as of a sister. Fonder,

perhaps," with a half sigh. "I will not let him know about it. He would not care to hear she had made a goose of herself."

Certainly, could the girls have known what an impression their "valentine" had made on Mr. Fraser, they might have been quite satisfied; for Milly's face haunted his dreams, and he woke in the morning with a pleasant sense of something very unusual having happened. However, there was not a trace of anything unusual in his manner when he bade the young ladies good-morning, and except that he only remained a moment near their counter, they noticed no deviation from his usual routine.

"Pooh!" laughed Helen, after he had passed them. "We might have saved ourselves that scare. I do not believe he even thought of suspecting us; you are quite safe, Milly."

Milly, who had not raised her eyes while Mr. Fraser was near (a fact of which that gentleman had been conscious), now felt much relieved at Helen's words, and cheered up accordingly. But Ida Munson was not so much pleased.

"What a dolt the man is!" she muttered angrily to herself. "The idea of wasting all that powder on him! He is evidently quite too superior to notice it; but there's one comfort, he won't hold Miss Briggs in very high estimation after this," and she hugged this slight consolation to herself with a venomous little laugh.

For several days nothing was heard of the "valentine" affair, and Milly would very likely have forgotten it, had it not been for the shy consciousness which seized her whenever she happened to see Mr. Fraser, and caused her color to rise when she felt his eyes upon her, and it was strange how often she found him looking at her.

Phil. Fraser could not have told why he caught himself watching her so often and so intently. He could not help seeing her embarrassment when he was near her, and put it down in her favor; for in spite of his admiration of her beauty, he heartily disliked the idea of her forgetting her maidenly dignity so far as to have sent him the "photograph," and would have been very sorry to see her show no feeling.

In the meantime, quite unknown to himself, he was becoming very much interested in her. Several times he found himself contrasting the "photograph" with the original, not at all in favor of the former.

"It did not do her justice," he said to himself; indeed he doubted if any photographer could catch that varying expression of hers with any truth.

It will be seen, therefore, that Mr. Philip Fraser (utterly unimpressible as he had always considered himself) was no more impervious to bright eyes and red lips than other members of his sex. But quite unconscious of his danger he continued to make his pleasant little study of Miss Briggs without any attempt to become better acquainted with her. Thus matters might have gone on indefinitely had it not been for a certain visit of Jack Briggs to Mr. Fraser's room, about a week after the receipt of the "photograph."

How it had happened that careless, good-looking Jack Briggs had become so friendly with that queer fellow Fraser was still a matter of astonishment to those who knew them both; and it was true that to a casual observer they appeared utterly unsuited to one another; but it was not so in reality. In spite of Jack's fun-loving nature, which made him a universal favorite, there was a good deal of depth to his character. He was not altogether devoted to pleasure, but was very earnest in his work, fond of books, and had a strong appreciation of Fraser's sterling good sense; while under Phil's stern outer-crust there was a current of quiet humor, which responded pleasantly enough to Jack's lighter vein. The two had grown to be very warm friends, though Jack had made all the advances towards friendship. But he was as sure of Fraser now (he often said) as of himself. Thus he frequented Phil's room at all times, certain of a welcome. Upon this evening, having no other engagement, he had strolled in and seated himself in Phil's comfortable arm-chair, with a cigar, prepared for a long chat. They had been discussing all sorts of things, and the talk had turned upon books, as it often did (Phil being a great reader), and Fraser picked up the volume he was reading to show his friend a certain

passage. In doing so, the "photograph" slipped from between its leaves and fell face downwards at Jack's feet. He picked it up mechanically (Phil had not noticed it) and held it in his hand while his friend was reading. As Fraser closed the book his glance fell upon the picture. Starting eagerly forward, he would have taken it from Jack's hand; but too late, for Jack, not seeing his movement, had turned it to the light. His look of utter amazement was too much for Fraser. After all, though he was annoyed at the mishap, it had a ridiculous side, and he could hardly restrain a smile as Jack, too astonished for the moment to speak, sat staring at his cousin's face. Raising his eyes at last to Fraser, he asked in his most frigidly dignified tone:

"May I inquire how you came into possession of this?"

Fraser could see that he was much annoyed, and did not wonder at it, for he knew how fond Jack was of his cousin and how jealously he regarded her name.

It was a very sore point with Jack that any of his women-kind should be obliged to work for their living, and if it had been possible to persuade his aunt and Milly to allow him to support them, he would have strained every nerve to do so; but neither of them would listen to such a thing.

"No," said Milly, "you are not my brother, and if you were, I should not think of allowing you to bear the burden of supporting the family. We are all poor together, but we ought to be thankful, you and I, Jack, that we can earn our own living; and never fear," she added, with a quick appreciation of his warm heart, "if ever mother and I need anything, we will not hesitate to come to you for help."

So all Jack could do was to secure a lodging in the same house with his aunt and cousin, take Milly about a little in a quiet way, and watch carefully over their interests. He was very fond of Milly's beauty, and had a great admiration for the manner in which she conducted herself, and for her aristocratic ideas which made her somewhat reserved toward his sex. Jack had not a shade of warmer feeling for his pretty cousin than that of brotherly affection. But he did admire

and believe her all that a woman should be. To find her picture there in the possession of a man almost a stranger to her not only startled but displeased him thoroughly.

At first Phil. was puzzled how to answer him; but he decided finally to tell him the simple truth.

"I am sorry, Jack," he began, "that you should have seen that. I ought not to have left it about so carelessly."

"Never mind that," Jack interrupted him sharply. "How you came by it is what I wish to know." Then half ashamed of his anger, as he caught his friend's look, he added: "I beg your pardon, Fraser, but you know, confound it, I don't understand it!"

"No, of course you don't, Jack," replied Phil.; "neither do I. I am quite willing to tell you how I came by it; but I hardly think it will give you much information."

Thereupon he related the whole story. Jack listened intently, while the surprise deepened on his face.

When Fraser had ended, Jack picked up the "photograph" again and studied it as if he expected to see the likeness change under his gaze.

"See here, Fraser, there must be some mistake. This is a picture of Milly, certainly. I have one like it, but as for her ever having sent it to you, why it's impossible, you know. Why, what do you take her for?" glaring angrily at Phil.

"I did not say your cousin sent it," said his friend calmly; "but, as you say yourself, there is no doubt as to whom the picture represents, and, excuse me, Jack, but can you tell me who did send it, if she did not?"

"It is not her handwriting," went on Jack, not noticing the question. "It is not her writing on the envelope."

"No," replied Fraser, "I suppose not."

"I say," cried Jack, struck by the sarcastic tone, "Fraser, you do not for one instant suppose that my cousin sent you that picture? Why she is utterly incapable of such a thing! She is the most timid, modest little girl you ever knew. Why hang it, man! Don't you suppose I know what I am talking about?"

As a slight smile hovered on Phil.'s lips:

"My dear fellow," he replied, "I have not the slightest doubt that Miss Briggs is everything you say. The whole thing is evidently intended only as a joke, and had I only been more careful, I might have spared you this annoyance."

"Annoyance," burst out Jack, "my annoyance is a very small thing when I think what her feelings would be could she know of this. I must sift this matter to the bottom. I cannot allow anyone to hold an erroneous impression of my cousin," he went on proudly. "You will permit me to take this photograph, Fraser. I should like to return it to its rightful owner."

Now this did not please Mr. Fraser at all. He had not the slightest desire to solve all this mystery, if in doing so, or allowing it to be done for him, he must part with the cherished picture. He did not like that term, "rightful owner." Whom did it belong to if not to him? It had certainly been intended for him by some one, and remembering Milly's blushes and downcast face, he could not but feel that she was the sender. Still it would never do to let Jack know his feelings, so he answered quietly:

"Why, certainly, Briggs, if you think it necessary to trouble yourself in this matter, do so by all means; but it seems to me hardly worth while. As you say, it will probably annoy Miss Briggs beyond measure, and really the affair is quite safe with me. I should never have mentioned it even to you, had you not discovered it for yourself. You know I am no gossip, Jack?"

"Indeed, Fraser," Jack replied heartily, "I am quite sure of that; but, nevertheless, I am not satisfied to let the matter rest here, so, with your permission, I will keep this." And, suiting the action to the word, he placed "photograph" and "envelope" in his pocket-book.

What more could Fraser say? He swallowed his vexation as best he could, and very soon Jack bade him good night.

However, it was a day or two before he could muster courage to tell Milly his story or attempt to trace the mystery. Thus there was time for another event to occur.

On the morning of the day on which Jack made his visit to Fraser, Ida Munson

announced to her companions that she should leave them at the end of the week. "She was tired of a 'shop-girl's' life, she said, 'and, as there was really no necessity for her remaining, she was going to her home in a distant town, where, she hinted, affairs of matrimonial nature awaited her.'"

It must be owned that the girls evinced a very mild regret at her communication. She had never been a favorite among them, so, though they were all polite enough to her, she could not but feel that their politeness was rather lukewarm.

"I fancy," said Helen to Milly, "that Miss Munson has seen the fallacy of human hopes in your cousin's direction."

Milly laughed her gleeful little laugh as she answered:

"I cannot believe she is so absurd as to have supposed he would really become interested in her. I should not like her to know it, of course, but Jack really dislikes her. I am sorry she makes herself so disagreeable. She has been one of us here so long that we ought to miss her very much."

"Don't waste any sympathy on her, Milly. I really do not think she is worth it. She does not care a snap for any of us, and I think she has been especially unpleasant to you."

Milly sighed a little. Possibly one fault in her nature was her desire to possess every one's good-will, but Miss Munson's departure could not be a very heavy cross to her.

Ida was to leave on Saturday, and on Friday evening Jack made up his mind to question his cousin on the subject of the "photograph."

Milly had been unusually light-hearted through the week, for Mr. Fraser appeared to have quite forgotten to watch her, and thus she was relieved of much of her embarrassment, when she thought of the valentine. She could not know, of course, that he avoided her only because he feared that Jack might have already spoken to her, and dreaded the effect of his story. Therefore, when Jack very seriously requested a few words in private with her, Milly laughed at his sober face, and saucily told him that he looked like a Father Confessor with something on his mind.

"I have something on my mind," Jack

replied gravely, "and it has been there several days. Milly, will you be kind enough to account to me for this?" he added, producing the yellow envelope, and handing it to her.

Milly's color rose, and Jack's heart fell in equal proportion, as they stood looking at one another. Milly was the first to speak.

"Oh, Jack!" she cried, "how did you find out that I sent it?"

Jack groaned inwardly.

It was true then she did send it, and his pride must have a decided fall.

"Milly," he said severely, "I did not suppose it possible for you to do such a thing as this. How in the world did it happen? Why," cried Jack, his anger increasing as he watched her pretty, blushing face, conscience-stricken before him, "it is utterly unlike you, such a forward, unmaidenly thing to do. I am sure I cannot imagine what Fraser must think of it all."

Milly's anger rose to meet his as he uttered these last words, "unmaidenly."

"Jack, what do you mean?" she cried. "How dare you say that to me, or apply it to such a little joke as this, which, though it may be foolish, is quite harmless, and in which I am not alone concerned? As for Mr. Fraser," she went on, growing hotter in her first excitement, "he is more of a stick than we all thought him, if he is so terribly shocked at this!"

"Why, Milly," answered astonished Jack, "I don't know what to make of you. I beg your pardon if I called this by too hard a name; perhaps I went too far; but surely it is a little out of the common course of things for a young lady to give her photograph, unasked, to a man with whom she is very slightly acquainted."

The murder was out. Milly literally gasped in her surprise.

"Jack, are you crazy? My photograph! I never gave my photograph to any man but you."

Jack flung up both hands in a transport.

"Well, either I must be crazy, or you certainly are. Milly, open that envelope and tell me if that is your likeness, or if you have a double?"

Milly did as he bade her, and drew out her own smiling photograph to the light.

In utter bewilderment the picture fell from her hands as she stared blankly at Jack, who had expected to find her overwhelmed with confusion.

"Well," he said, as she did not speak, "now suppose you tell me what it all means."

"I don't know," faltered Milly.

"Don't know!" Jack cried, almost fiercely, advancing close to her. "Milly, did you or did you not send that picture to Fraser?"

Anger again took possession of Milly at this question, and flinging off the hand he had laid on her shoulder, she sprang to her feet and faced him.

"Jack, I will never forgive you! Of course I did not send it! How could you think I would?" went on poor Milly, bursting into tears. "I never could have believed you would think such a thing of me."

This was too much for Jack, who placed Milly in her chair again, and soothed her grief as best he could with great compunction, protesting that he did not believe it, never had and never could, with much irrelevancy. At last Milly dried her tears and became equal to the occasion once more.

"Listen, Jack," she said, "I cannot account for the presence of this photograph in any way whatever; but that I addressed that envelope is quite true, though how Mr. Fraser could have guessed it I don't see."

"It would have been strange if he hadn't," muttered Jack, "as your picture was inside."

"But it *wasn't* inside," cried Milly, "or that is I certainly did not put it there."

"The plot thickens. Shall we ever know how it got there?" groaned her cousin; "but explain about the envelope, please; let me know what you did do, if possible."

Thereupon Milly related the whole story of the "valentine," adding that she had thought it extremely foolish; but had no idea of hearing anything more about it.

"The amount of it all is," said Jack, after hearing the whole, "that some one substituted the 'photograph' for the 'valentine.' It is our business now to

find out who that some one is, and I must set the affair straight with Fraser."

"Oh," moaned Milly, "what does he think; what does he say? Oh, Jack, I shall have to leave the store. I can never look him in the face again."

"Nonsense!" answered Jack, who was more thoroughly angry than he had ever been in his life. "Fraser isn't a fool. When the matter is explained he will be ready to apologize to you for believing you capable of such a piece of idiocy. You cannot blame him, Milly," as she moaned again. "He doesn't know you, or much about women, anyway."

"Oh, I don't blame him," she sobbed. "It is my own fault. I ought never to have given in when they urged me, but they were so persistent, and Ida Munson dared me."

"Oh!" cried Jack. "Miss Munson dared you, did she?"

Then he said no more, but a quiet opinion began to form in his mind as he remembered how often he had noticed Ida's apparent maliciousness toward Milly. But his cousin had borne enough for one evening, so bidding her cheer up and he would see that it was all right, he left her to go straight to Fraser. That gentleman received him with ready sympathy, and expressed deep regret for the extreme annoyance it must have caused Miss Briggs—of whom he said so many pretty things that Jack's feelings were decidedly comforted, and he left him with a heartier liking for him than ever before.

In the midst of his pleasure at the matter being thus cleared up, Fraser could not but feel one regret, and that was the loss of his "valentine," which was, of course, gone forever, never having been intended for him.

As for poor Milly, she passed a sleepless night, and found herself the next morning with a severe headache and far too much exhausted mentally to undertake her duties at the store. She managed to pen a tearful little note to Helen, telling her the circumstances, and begging her to help her solve the mystery.

When the story was disclosed to the other girls, great was the excitement and universal sympathy expressed for Milly. Miss Munson stood by and listened to it all without remark; but the others scarcely

noticed her silence in their eagerness to discover the truth. They recalled all the circumstances of the day the "valentine" was sent, and among them Helen remembered the fact of Milly's counting but eleven pictures where there should have been twelve.

"Wouldn't I like to find the villain that did it?" she cried. "I never supposed Milly had an enemy in the world!"

Ida Munson was delighted. The success of her scheme had come just in time, as this was her last day at the store, and evidently none had the least suspicion of her having had a hand in it. But here she reckoned without her host, for toward noon Jack Briggs entered the store and came up to their counter. Helen, whom he knew well, he greeted cordially; but, beyond a slight inclination, he hardly noticed Miss Munson, although he stopped close to her to talk with Helen.

"My cousin has written to you, I think," he said to her. "Have you been able to discover anything about this unfortunate affair?"

"No," she answered, "nothing. We are all at a loss to imagine who could have been mean and cruel enough to do such a thing to Milly."

"Well, it is surprising" said Jack, "but some one is to blame for it, and I propose to find out who it is."

Here he turned suddenly upon Ida; "You have no idea, I suppose, Miss Munson?"

For a moment she was utterly disconcerted. It flashed upon her at once, from the expression of his face, that he had guessed her secret; but she had no intention of owning it. "Pray, how should I know, Mr. Briggs?" she cried, bridling and looking at him haughtily. "I am not sufficiently in your cousin's confidence to know her friends or her enemies!"

"Oh," said Jack, coolly, returning her indignant glance with interest, "I fancied you might be posted with regard to the latter;" Ida was sure now that he suspected her, but she cared very little now if she were found out; only she meant to be safely away before it was openly known; so she replied, "I do not blame you, Mr. Briggs, for your anxiety to discover the truth of this matter. It is a most unfortunate occurrence. A thing of this kind

always clings to a girl so. I should be very sorry it had got about as it has. Were I Miss Briggs, it would be much better to hush it up." The cool insolence of her words and manner stung Jack into greater anger than ever; but she was a woman, and therefore not to be answered in her own coin. So, he only glared at her, and then turned to join Mr. Fraser, who at that moment approached. Ida felt sure that Jack communicated his suspicions to him, for she could see them look at her as they talked; but she cared nothing for that. It would be long, she knew, before Milly recovered from the mortification of the affair, even though her innocence were entirely proved, and Miss Munson, feeling herself to be discovered, determined to write a parting note to Milly and disclose the whole, thereby adding another sting to her trouble by showing her that she had such an unscrupulous enemy. So it chanced that on the following Monday morning, Milly, with soul and body girded to face the affair as calmly as she could, was met by this letter, in which Miss Munson confessed the whole, and which quite overwhelmed poor Milly. In spite of the unqualified sympathy of her friends, she could not get over it. It seemed to her that she was disgraced forever, and by no fault of her own. She stood at her post all day, with a white, woe-stricken, little face, that filled Phil. Fraser's heart with pity as he gazed at her from a distance; for, with true delicacy, he refrained from approaching the counter. Late that afternoon he had occasion to go down into the packing room of the establishment, and upon descending the stairs into the rather dark room below, he was surprised to hear sounds of distress proceeding from some unknown quarter. For a moment he stood, uncertain whether to retire, or to attempt to discover who the person was in such apparent grief. Deciding upon the latter course, he passed around a pile of boxes, which stood in his way, and came upon a sight which transfixed him at once. Upon a big packing case, her face buried in her handkerchief, and her figure quite convulsed with woe, sat poor Milly, quite unconscious that any one was observing her grief, to which she was giving perfect freedom. Fraser stood and gazed at her until he could bear it no

longer. That she should be in such trouble, and that he, however unwittingly, should be the chief cause of it, was too much for him; therefore he spoke, which was exactly what he should not have done.

"Miss Briggs," he said, "I—"

At the sound of his voice, Milly tore the handkerchief from her eyes and sprang to her feet. For an instant she could not distinguish his face in the dimness of the room; but the moment she recognized him she gave him one look of horror mingled with anger, and without a word dashed past him up the stairs.

Utterly dumfounded, Phil. took a seat in his turn, on the case and pondered. What a fool he had been to speak to her. It was quite true that he did not understand women, as Jack had so often told him. For a day or two nothing happened. Milly came to the store as usual, and Jack had made Fraser acquainted with all the facts. The affair seemed to be dying out; but not without leaving some effect, for Phil. Fraser had been obliged to own to himself that he had not only learned to admire Miss Briggs and wish to know her better, but that, in short, he had fallen completely in love with the pretty original of his "valentine."

As for Milly, in spite of herself, she could not but appreciate his true manliness and delicacy all through the trouble, and she caught herself watching and admiring him often as he attended strictly to his business, apparently without any other thought.

However, although these two were becoming so interested in one another, they might never have come any nearer together but for one blissful rainy night, when Milly was without her umbrella. She had been detained at the store later than usual, and had hurried out at last just as they were closing only to find it raining hard—a steady, persistent rain. Her companions had all gone before her, and she found she must face it alone, at least until the car she needed should overtake her. It was blowing hard, and she had gone but a few steps before she found herself getting thoroughly drenched. In despair she stopped under a street lamp, to draw her wrappings more closely about her and listen for the sound of an accom-

modating car, when a gentleman came up to her, passed her, then stopped and looked back. It was Mr. Fraser. Seeing her predicament, he joined her at once, and without hesitation said, "Miss Briggs, excuse me, but have you no umbrella?"

Milly faltered something to the effect that she had not known it was raining so hard and had expected to take a car, at the same time insisting that she could not deprive him of his umbrella. "Then," said Mr. Fraser, "you must allow me to share it with you and escort you home. Indeed you must," he went on more decidedly as Milly hesitated, "you will take cold." It is not right for you to be out on such a night." Something of unconscious tenderness in his tone made itself felt by Milly, and caused her color to rise unseen by him. Without more ado she accepted his kindness and even took the arm he offered her. For a few blocks they walked in silence, which Mr. Fraser broke at last. He had been screwing up his courage all the way to touch upon the subject of which he knew both their minds to be full, and finally he said: "Miss Briggs, you must forgive me for bringing up what I know must be to you a very disagreeable subject, but I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without expressing my regret for all the annoyance I have been the means of causing you." Now certainly this was magnanimous, and such Milly felt it to be. She could only murmur out a few confused words of her own regret and the hope that he would try to forget it all. "I cannot forget it," said Fraser, warmed to his subject by the touch of the little fingers on his arm; and perhaps carried too far by his feeling for Milly, he went on to expatiate on his sorrow, until Milly, quite overcome by his kindness, the dismal wet night, and possibly by her own feelings, disgraced herself by bursting into tears, as if there were not moisture enough in the air. But this was the climax. What happened next neither of the two could exactly tell; but certain it was that when they arrived at Milly's lodgings, after a walk in which Miss Munson's sins, the rain, tears and all were forgotten, Fraser was the happiest man in the world, and before he parted from Milly, he was again the proud possessor of his "valentine."

Hans in Kelder.—A Legend of the Great Frost of 1683.

BY K. M. H.

PERHAPS the gayest winter ever known in London city was that of 1683-4—in the reign of King Charles the Second. From the beginning of December to the fifth of the following February the river Thames, from London bridge to Westminster, was so completely frozen that another city was created upon the ice, and furnished with all the commodities, carriages, festivities and entertainments of the city proper; and a state of things prevailed which never had been seen within its limits; for, free from all the restraints of rank, all classes of people intermingled freely in a long carnival called the Blanket Fair, whilst for three months the fair, while it lasted, was the great attraction of the day, the printing presses erected on the ice being kept constantly busy registering the names of troops of visitors.

During this winter a solitary man, tall, dark, and of foreign appearance, engaged a lonely hovel on the worst part of the Bankside, a locality enjoying no good reputation, as many a midnight cry from the victims of robbery frequently attested. But as the stranger placed in the hands of the owner of the house a sum amounting to more than its full value, his object in seeking a home in such a situation was not narrowly questioned, though the only information he gave concerning himself was that he had spent much of his life abroad, where he had acquired the Dutch title of *Hans in Kelder*, or Jack in the Cellar. His employment was found to be that of an herbalist to the apothecaries, and he was often absent days at a time from his solitary abode; yet, strange to say, he was never seen to cross the bridge into the city and none ever saw food carried into his house.

Moreover, he was never known to mingle in the sports of the Fair, nor even to approach the great public fires, around which, by day and night, the people gathered with song and jest; and it was said that even the roasting of an entire ox over a great iron pan on the ice on the gala day of the season failed to bring

him from his dreary dwelling so remote from the scenes of the festivities.

"Surely something must be wrong with this man," said the gossips, one and all. But as Master Hans neither discovered plots nor plotted himself, minded his own concerns and was no gossip, they were obliged to content themselves by denouncing him in accordance with their own prejudices as Papist or Puritan, madman or wizard. Yet Hans lived through it all after his own peculiar fashion, and it was even a matter of doubt whether any of their abuse ever reached his ears. This state of things, however, could not fail in time to excite the alarm of the worshipful Master Bedral, Beadle of St. Magnus Church, a dignitary full of zeal in the discharge of his office, and a fine specimen of an ancient city parish officer, deeply solicitous for the welfare of his Majesty's realm.

"There be plotters abroad, we know," said he, with a solemn shake of his head, "and of such shrewd tales as these we of the legality must take due note."

"Surely, Master Bedral," replied his crony, David Saunders, to whom this remark was addressed, "and it may well chance that we have among us a notable spy. God save the king!"

"Aye, by my faith," said the beadle, "and his majesty's poor servant must look well into the matter of this fellow—Sam in a Skelter, I think they call him, or some other heathenish name. He shall be watched for on the ice every night, and if caught he shall give a better account of himself, I promise you, those telling me that Sam's in a Skelter."

"By certie, I wonder we can sleep in our beds of a night."

"Aye, aye, Master Bedral; but I tell you there are worse things to be seen of a night than a poor fellow like that," and glancing cautiously around as if to guard himself from an unseen enemy, Saunders drew near to his old crony and confided to him in low tones a tale fit to freeze even the blood of a beadle warmed by the great feast-day fire and many a steaming tankard.

"One night, of late," said he, "as I left a goodly company at the Royal Oak, no earlier than twelve by the clock, it was a bitter night, too, not fit for a dog to be out; and I begrudged to go home even then; as I drew near London bridge what should I hear but such an awesome moaning and groaning as never my ears heard before. Now it is well known to all and Sandy that I 'ae a tender heart, and so, though my teeth chattered in my head, I drew near to the place where the sound came from. And there true as I live, on a high starling of the bridge, sat one in a white sheet like a tall man, grinning and groaning as it were making a lament for his sins. My word, though, I heard not much of it, for I just dropped as if dead, and there I lay till a good neighbor coming that way helped me on to my feet and saw me home. You may well believe I could but scarce walk."

"You don't think it was the ale of the Royal Oak, do you, Savie!" said the beadle.

"No, for I was forced to be content that night with very little for lack of ready money, and I was full sober, I trow."

"Ne'ertheless, my man, I'm none so sure about the sight ye saw; but if it was a pestilent fellow that took on such a likeness, (and stranger things have been, ye know), we'll deal with him right speedily. This very night we are to seek all evil-doers—beshrew them. These be no sights for an orderly parish."

The evening of the day on which this conversation was held was near the end of the time appointed for holding Blanket Fair, and consequently the encampments received even a larger number of visitors than usual, and the double lines of tents which formed the two long streets of the city on the ice were gaily decorated with signs and garlands, while everywhere the tavernmen's bushes called attention to the good wine mine host of the tavern was ready to dispense to his guests. It was a brilliant scene.

Soon after the lighting of the lamps a foot-passenger might have been seen wending his solitary way toward the tents—a tall, dark man with hard features, enveloped in a large cloak, his broad hat slouched over his face. He

seemed unfamiliar with his surroundings and hesitated as to which way to bend his steps. Perceiving his uncertainty one of the throng of merry-makers stepped promptly forward and bade him welcome to Blanket Fair and its goodly sights.

The welcome was courteously received by the stranger, who, noticing the soldierly bearing of the man, promptly inquired by what title he should address his new found friend.

"Merely as a poor captain of Rupert's, sir, cast aside like a piece of rusty armor now that the king—God save his majesty—enjoys his own again. And you, sir, how shall I call you?"

The new comer seemed slightly embarrassed by the question. "For me," he replied somewhat hesitatingly, "the title of *Hans in Kelder* will suffice. I traveled under that name in Holland. But now that I am in mine own land let us hie to some honest house of entertainment where I may feel that I am in Merrie England once more."

"With all my heart," said the captain. "Here is the Royal Oak."

"I attend you, captain," said the stranger. "It is not the first time I have found the Royal Oak a good shelter," and the two men entered together, the company assembled in the square tent, and, settling themselves at its hospitable board, called for the best Canary the house could supply. With many a gay toast and merry song the hours sped quickly away, till finally the jovial band called upon the captain for that favorite called "*Rupert's* hymn."

"I," said he, "you who never heard it just before a charge of Rupert's men will never know it as it really was; but I'll give it with all my heart," and he led off with such spirit that soon all were shouting with him that wonderful battle hymn of the Cavaliers. The hard features of Hans lost their harshness as he became flushed and animated, and he too at length joined in the rushing tide of the chorus with as much ardor as if he had that moment his foot in the stirrup on the field of Naseby with the royal army in full charge behind him.

There was but one silent voice in the company, that of a sailor who had hardly

been noticed at his entrance, and who seemed by the ferocity of his features and the arms he carried to be of the rudest class of pirates, though few would have dared to ask him the question.

The applause and excitement produced by the song was still at its height, when there broke upon the ears of the company a most unexpected sound, namely, the loud and pompous tones of the Beadle of St. Magnus, who pressed into their midst, quite suddenly, followed by a party of watchmen.

"Make way here, make way here, good people!" he cried, "for us of the legality, who have come to look for hidden enormities. We have warrant for what we do, as shall be manifested."

He cast a scrutinizing glance around the tent, which rested chiefly on the sailor, the captain and his companion, Hans. Then turning quickly to the latter he said, "I pray you, friend, how may you be called, for I am looking for a man of your description?" glancing as he spoke at a paper in his hand. "Yes, yes; long-bodied, dark haired, foreign-looking. How may you be named?"

"You may call me Hans in Kelder," was the reply.

"In sooth, *may* I? If you call yourself that it is enough, for you are known by it for a Ruane, whom I shall this night show the inside of the bridge watch-house."

"Not without my consent," said the stranger, coolly.

"Nor without mine," said the captain.

"Fellows, fellows," said the beadle, "we are not to be bullied in our lawful work. You will answer for this to your superiors. And who may you be, master mariner?"

"The devil!" cried the sailor, starting from his seat.

For an instant the valiant officer of the law recoiled, and then, recovering himself, answered, "Then I charge the watch with you in the name of King Charles and of St. Magnus; but speak, knave, I am not to be trifled with. What is thy name, I say?"

"See here now, friend," said the sailor, "sheer off and be content with a civil answer, will you? When we sailors

don't chose to give our names we too answer to that of Hans in Kelder."

"Oh, ho! a plot! a plot! my masters," shouted the beadle, "there is a villain of this name there in every parish, and there will be the firing of London again."

"Who was it spake of firing London," exclaimed the sailor; "who said I threw the first fire ball," and starting up in a frenzy, he rushed out into the night.

Appalled, the little company gazed at each other breathless, when in the midst of the excitement the door of the tent was flung open and in rushed David Saunders, his face pale with terror. "Come along all of you," he said, "come along and see the devil himself, clad in a white sheet, rampaging and crying on London bridge," and he, too, rushed out of the tent, followed by all present.

Far away in the distance, toward the bridge, they heard the sharp report of pistolshots. "Some poor benighted wretch," thought the captain, "mayhaps we will be in time to rescue him," and pressed valiantly forward. True enough, when they arrived at the bridge, there lay on one of the starlings the figure which had so terrified poor Saunders; but it was plain to be seen that it was that of a wounded man. The good captain staid for no words, but mounting by the blocks of ice the broad flat of wood extending from the pier, he stooped to lift the man. But what was his surprise to find himself in a strong grasp, and turning his head to recognize the ferocious features of the sailor who had left them so abruptly, "Hello there! let go, comrade," said he, "we come to rescue the man."

"Yes, and learn my secret. I'll have your life first. I have the lives of two men at my belt yet," was the savage reply.

"What ho! Gentlemen! gentlemen! wake up! here is a secret worth a king's ransom," cried the captain.

"Nay," faintly murmured the wounded man, "say rather worth a nation's curse." The sailor raised his pistol as if to fire at him, but instead pointed it at his own breast, fired, and fell lifeless into the river below.

The wounded man, slightly raising himself, gazed after him. "Gone! Gone!" he said, "and I too must soon follow.

Nay, do not strive to aid me, but listen while I have yet strength to speak. That man who has just sank from your sight was Hubert Cloudesly, the infamous wretch whose hand first fired London, and I was his accomplice! Aye, you may well shrink from me," for, in horror, the men who were holding him dropped him again; "but ye are all avenged, for even they who lost friends and fortune in that awful burning in the wildest moment of horror were in Paradise compared to me, even from that hour. After a restless wandering life in all the earth, I came back here to die in penance. This night, for the first time since we set London in flames, Hubert and I met, and to preserve his secret he attempted to take my life. It is ebbing faster now than the tide beneath me. This has been my penance, that every night as London slept I watched here in my grave clothes, bemoaning my sin. My ill-gotten wealth I have scattered among the unfortunate. O, London! thy name shall rise in glory from thine ashes, live forever, while I die accursed and unknown."

Exhausted, his little remnant of strength gone, he, too, like his companion in guilt, his life ended—fell backwards beneath the bridge. As he sunk, however, the wind blew the sheet from his face, and Saunders, catching a glimpse of it, exclaimed, "Mycertie! but it's the wizard Carl they called Hans in Kelder, who lived in yon hovel on the bankside."

"Surely, surely," said Bedral, bustling up and grasping the collar of the tall stranger, "and there's a family of them, the rogues; but this one shall not escape me, by St. Magnus."

"Hold there!" cried the captain; "hands off this loyal gentleman. I'll be surety for him that he's no rogue, or go to prison with him."

"To prison with you, then, if you will," said the beadle; "but you shall not hinder me in my duty. Come on, sirrah, and stop these struggles," as the stranger strove to free himself from his grasp.

But now the most bewildering sight he had yet encountered met the eyes of the zealous servant of the law.

Suddenly the cloak which enveloped the tall form, yielding to his grasp, flew open and disclosed nothing less than the

silver star of the Garter suspended by a blue ribbon round the neck of the wearer. His hat falling off, too, at the same moment discovered the full features of Charles the Second himself, surrounded by that fine dark hair which so strongly characterized him.

"God save the king," exclaimed his doughty defender, swinging off the constable by his collar, "and now who goes to prison to night, my man?"

"Fear not," said the merry monarch, "fear not my worthy and zealous friend. Death and disguises make all men equal, and you did but your duty. Odds fish, gentlemen, this good man can surely terrify a knave with such a bailiff in Christendom, as you have seen, and moreover this night hath shown us that which kings may well be instructed by. And now, captain, let's back to the Royal Oak and finish our night, and in the morning you shall have both reward and employment. Believe me, my heart is grateful to all my old defenders, but mine eyes are not all-seeing, nor is my treasury without a bottom."

Such was one of the romantic occurrences of that strange winter of the great frost, and for a long time there was extant a bill printed on the ice on which were found the names of the royal family, one of whom was designated by the singular title of Hans in Kelder.

The following are the words of the celebrated Rupert's hymn:

Mount, gallants, mount, for the rays of the morning
Are gilding your arms on the tent-covered plain.

Mount, gallants, mount, for the day that is dawning
Must shine on us victors or shine on us as slain.

Mount, cavaliers! it is loyalty speeds you;
Mount, cavaliers! it is Rupert who leads you;
Mount, cavaliers! let the flag which precedes you
Be covered with blood or with glory again."

"Draw, gallants, draw! on the enemy dashing
Full on his ranks, irresistibly pour.
On, gallants, on! when the sabres are flashing,
Remember King Charles—and remember no more!

On, cavaliers! it is vengeance that speeds you;
On, cavaliers! it is Rupert who leads you;
On, cavaliers! let the flag which precedes you
Be covered with glory or covered with gore."